







***ANNIE BESANT—BUILDER OF NEW INDIA***









ANNIE BESANT. WARRIOR

# **ANNIE BESANT BUILDER OF NEW INDIA**



**Her Fundamental Principles  
of  
Nation Building**

**Besant Spirit Series  
1942**

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# Annie Besant—Messenger of the Gods

I NEVER know which volume to appreciate most in the very valuable collection of Dr. Annie Besant's masterpieces contained in The Besant Spirit Series of nine volumes and covering with her magic touch the complete field of human activity. Each volume sounds with perfect clarity the essential note she attaches to it, and is indispensable to every citizen in every part of the world who is eager to fulfil his duty to the utmost in every acre of the great estate of his Nation.

In this Besant Spirit Series are set forth in her own incomparable words the details of the fundamental principles she has discovered through long experience to be at the root of right individual citizenship, right nationhood, and right world citizenship.

But in this particular volume, *Annie Besant—Builder of New India*, she is applying these principles in their specific reference to that rebuilding of India which she had it in command from her Superiors to undertake.

Throughout the volume of some 550 pages every word comes straight from her own pen and, with but a very few exceptions, from the daily issues of her great crusading newspaper *New India*. These have never been re-published before and will come, I am sure, as a wonderful revelation to every reader, however well acquainted he may be with Dr. Besant's writings and speeches. But they will not only be a revelation, they will be a rich mine of information and guidance for politicians, statesmen, teachers, religious workers, artists, young people and old people, and the everyday citizen, alike.

In the chapters which follow, no field of National life is left unexplored or unrelated to the architectural plan for the building of the New India-to-be. The book is therefore a true *vade mecum* for every patriot, young or old, man or woman, who to any extent dedicates himself to his country's uplift.

But it should be clearly realized that as Dr. Besant wrote, whether in *New India* or in her innumerable books and pamphlets, so did she work, so did she live, almost every moment of the twenty-four hours, literally so sometimes. Her actions never lagged behind her exhortations. As she preached, so she practised. And when she called, she was ever the first to answer the call to a far fuller measure than she

expected from all others. She was indeed a leader, for she always led, she was always in the forefront.

Splendid were the bricks this Master-Builder fashioned for India's rebuilding—bricks which were intended to construct the building of India's Freedom at the very time she made them. But the bricklayers both in India and in Britain refused to lay them, so a very great opportunity was lost.

These bricks still await their laying, for each one of them has been fashioned in deepest dedication and in the perfect knowledge of the nature of the building which alone can worthily in design and majesty become the Life of India's Freedom. Today these bricks may be used, or again they may be discarded. Sooner or later they must be used, but woe to the generation which leaves them unused and therefore desecrated.

Except for a tribute or two from eminent public workers to her extraordinary power to identify herself with the very soul of India and with the essential foundations of the future happiness of the world, giving herself completely to these two great purposes, every word in this book, except also for a few sentences here and there for the better co-ordination of the text, comes flaming from her lips or from her pen,



and not just words but scintillating records of most strenuous and completely self-sacrificing activity.

There are, perhaps, here and there, passages which she would have modified in the light of the developments which have taken place during the last twenty-five years. I am clear she would not have modified her strictures upon Mr. Gandhi, for he has but just repeated on a far more terrible scale than heretofore actions which Dr. Besant knew she had the duty to denounce in the strongest terms and which Mr. Gandhi himself has often denounced with the fullest sense of their wrong. And it is impossible to dissociate the man himself from his works. But she might have modified—I do not know—her observations on Russia, so greatly has that country changed so far as ~~can~~ be judged. Still, I have preferred to include as many of her utterances as possible, so that her judgments on the situation as it then was may be carefully studied, and those relevant—and there are so many—to existing circumstances may be clearly perceived.

At the end of the book there appears what may be called an epitome of its contents, but which has been designed as a Call from Dr. Besant to the India of today—faced as India is by substantially the same problems as existed during Dr. Besant's Messengership on the physical plane. The words of the Call are

hers, taken from the book itself, but their relevancy and application are as vital as ever they were, as I am sure will be seen by every reader who, not blinded by prejudice, is alive to the nature of those principles alone on which a free and a great India can be built.

Most relevant to perceive is the outstanding fact that Dr. Besant was above all a woman of action, for while she was a prolific public speaker throughout the world—greatest orator of her age as she was, she followed the precept of Charles Bradlaugh and of G. K. Gokhale to the effect that a minute of speech should be preceded by at least an hour and more of hard study and microscopical examination of the facts. Such study and examination, together with the necessary translation into action alone could give the right to speak and to be heard. Thus was it that her utterances and her writings and all her activities were afire with Truth and alive with experience.

Dr. Besant lived the whole of herself in her speeches, in her writings and in her actions. She lived the whole of herself in all the details of her daily life. She lived in her daily newspaper *New India*. She lived the New India-to-be, and therefore was she the master-builder of New India.

At last she died for India, only laying down her physical body at the very last moment when it had

become utterly worn out in India's service and could be used no more.

Is not the Besant spirit, as very specially exemplified in the present volume, the spirit needed in India at the present time ?

Is not the Besant spirit the spirit of all who would serve the Motherland in self-sacrifice and in self-surrender ?

Therefore has this book been compiled as an act of service to Mother India in her present dire need, so that those who have the honour of being the Mother's servants today may be inspired and strengthened and guided by a very great and noble Servant of yesterday, though in truth of today and tomorrow no less, who more than all others awakened the citizens of India in the villages, towns, and cities—men, women, youth—to some realization at least of the glories of their Motherland, to the greatness of her coming destiny and to their duty to serve her with all their hearts.

In these catastrophic and calamitous, yet wonder-pregnant, times the figure of Annie Besant stands towering in the heart of India as the mighty Statue of India's Liberty.

May every lover of India throughout the world offer before that Statue the most fervent homage and

draw from it the will and heart and mind to serve the Motherland faithfully to the completion of the new home for her Eternal Life.

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Mrs. Adeltha Peterson, with the co-operation of Messrs. J. L. Davidge and C. S. Sarangam, and of Mrs. J. W. Halsey, is responsible for a compilation which has involved so intricate a research. A debt of gratitude is due from all who love India to these workers whose task, strenuous though it has been, has been a task of love and homage to the Motherland.

Mrs. Peterson is specially skilled in this work, but she has been the more successful by reason of her own devotion to the one without whose cooperation there would have been nothing to compile !

*George S. Curndale*

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# *India Pays Tribute to Greatness*



## ANNIE BESANT—EMPIRE BUILDER

*SIR S. SUBRAMANIA IYER, K.C.I.E., LL.D.*

THE Empires which have hitherto been built in the world have been built either by military commanders or by statesmen . . . . The time has now come when Empire-building must have a different basis . . . . The Empire-builder of today must have qualities vastly different from previous builders and statesmen, if today he is to carry out the plan of the Supreme. That means building with the power of religion and without the power of the sword . . . .

The new type of Empire-building, which the world now requires, is most strikingly exemplified by Dr. Besant, and the type is seen in her work for India. Her work will best be understood by those who realize the unusual task involved in building India to be a vital part of the British Empire. Here in this land we have many languages and many forms of religion, which separate the peoples into many communities. Now all these must be welded into one whole and unless that work is done here, the British Empire is bound to fail, for without India there is nothing in the British Empire but a name ; and if the British Empire does not perform the high



role before it, the future of the world will be seriously handicapped for ages. Therefore, Brotherhood as an essential principle in Empire-building in India is imperative. The Hindus must be united with the Muhammadans, and the Jains and Buddhists . . . .

Now India is not a *tabula rasa* ; the Empire-builder is not dealing with primitive peoples with no traditions or culture. India is a land of many communities who cherish a hoary civilization. They have their own religions, sciences, arts, and literatures. Therefore, the Empire-builder cannot do his work with the sword, but must appeal to reason and spirituality, in order to suit the new conditions of building. Who can accomplish this task except a soul of the type of Dr. Besant ? The required elements of love and sympathy can only be provided by one of her sex ; no man, however great, could show these qualities as finely as a woman. That is why the ego we know as Dr. Besant has been put into a woman's body to do her work in India. She has, however, at the same time, an iron will which supplies the element of the male sex. It is this will that was made manifest . . . in her refusal to concede by way of compromise any deviation in the matter of principle, even for the sake of obtaining her liberty and escaping from persecution that was likely to endanger her life, thus revealing the trait of the martyr.

### *The Indo-Aryan Type*

Dr. Besant's whole life is so spiritual that, as an Empire-builder, she is not aiming at a political institution but a spiritual organization. The especial characteristic mark of that organization may be said to be Aryan, for Dr. Besant

represents the Indo-Aryan type in perfection. She has in her nature all its elements ; when lecturing in Christian countries she is recognized as an exponent of Christianity ; in India we recognize her as an authority on our religion ; and it is the same when she lectures to Buddhist or Muhammadan audiences. Dr. Besant has the power of combining the various elements of Indo-Aryan culture and producing from them a beautiful mosaic.

This is important, for if an Empire is to be built in India it must have this character of a mosaic, and unless the builder is himself of this nature of a mosaic, the work cannot be done. Undoubtedly, Dr. Besant stands in a peculiar relation to the people of India. She has repeatedly stated her own belief that in her previous lives she has again and again been born in India, and that her present Western birth is only for the purpose of supplementing her Indian character with something of the Western, in order that she might do better her work of organization for India . . . There is no instance of a single Western person, except herself, who has called forth . . . such universal love and sympathy from every part of India. The educated and the uneducated, the English-speaking and those who know not a word of English, have all united in one profound admiration and reverence, and many are the prayers that go up from temple and shrine on her behalf today.

It is interesting to note how Dr. Besant began her work of Empire-building. When she came to India, she did not at once work in the political field. She expounded one religion after another, emphasizing the common unity of faith and aspiration. In India, where religion may degenerate

into fanaticism, with its concomitant of bloodshed, Dr. Besant's first work was to make fanaticism impossible, and today the whole attitude of Hindus to Muhammadans and *vice versa* has changed, so far as religion is concerned.

Her next work was to put education upon a religious basis. A lasting monument to her education work is the Hindu University, which she organized as the Central Hindu College of Bènares . . . . The Central Hindu College, under Dr. Besant's guidance, was the first large institution definitely to embody the teaching of religion as part of its curriculum. The impulse she gave has influenced hundreds of schools to make religious teaching and worship an integral part of education. And to crown all her labours, she has . . . organized the National Board of Education, comprising many of the leading men in India, to put education on a thoroughly national basis.

The next unique thing that Dr. Besant has done is to bring together the Hindus and the Muhammadans as brothers in one common National work. This is a miracle, the significance of which only those living in India can understand; and though many have helped in this union, she stands supremely as the worker of the great miracle. No less marvellous is the fact that this stupendous work has been achieved in the course of three years, since she took up political work. There are few Empire-builders who can show such a record of work in so brief a time. Not less noteworthy is her bringing together once again into a common political body the "Extremists" and the "Moderates" of the Indian National Congress. Many had prophesied that these two bodies would never unite, but Dr. Besant has done it.

Dr. Besant has brought about union, because of the force of the ideals which she has lived in her own life. One of the prominent Muhammadan leaders, the Hon. Mr. Syed Wazir Hassan, Secretary of the All-India Muslim League, referred the other day in a public meeting "to the spiritual side of her life, and how ennobling from that point of view her influence has been." "I look upon Dr. Annie Besant," he said, "as an embodiment and external symbol of what is my ideal of existence. Life is not worth living without such ideals, and we should resist with all our power attacks threatening the fulfilment of our hopes and the attainment of our ideals." . . .

All through Dr. Besant's work in India she has continually emphasized the inseparable bond between India and England, Indeed, her insistence upon this essential element of the future has made her to be sharply criticized by those in India who have not believed as firmly in the ideals of the British Empire as she has done. It is just because she has this ideal conception of the British Empire that she has been so anxious to emphasize the unique nationality and worth of the Indian peoples to the British Empire. It is this that has made her preach Home Rule against the wish of ninety-nine per cent of her race in India. The sincerity of her purpose could not be evinced better than by her unflagging work of uplifting the peoples of India in spite of every misrepresentation and even vilification.

One noteworthy characteristic of her political work is its constitutionalism. Never for a moment has she hesitated to denounce violence in every form. . . . She has not been merely critical, she has actually shown the methods

of construction. The "Madras Parliament," which she organized for training in Parliamentary method and debate has to its credit... a number of carefully worked-out Acts....

Dr. Besant is a profound mystic and when, after twenty-one years of strenuous life in India, she entered into the political field, it was as a practical mystic of a unique type. ... Dr. Besant is unique in that she only uses peaceful persuasion; she achieved her work by calling forth the powers of faith within men. It was well said by Sir Arthur Lawley, when he was Governor of Madras, "Her voice is never raised save to move her hearers to some nobler impulse, to some loftier ideal, to some higher plane of thought."

—1 October 1917, *New India*

## **THE ALLAHABAD "LEADER"**

The editor, Sir C. Y. Chintamani, on Dr. Besant's 85th birthday wrote: "Where can one find the like of this marvellous personage in the combination of the qualities of enthusiasm, eloquence, power of organization, courage, energy, determination, purposefulness, optimism, and faith in her mission? Truly is she a living wonder. To how many millions has she not been the inspiration and the unapproachable example? If Irish in body, Mrs. Besant is Hindu in spirit and faith, and she has looked upon and served India as her Motherland with a devotion and at a sacrifice equalled by few and surpassed by none. We pay her today our tribute of admiration and respect, and are proud to be able to do so."

**MR. JINNAH**

"No other person has worked and served our cause with that singleness of purpose, devotion, and transparent sincerity as has Mrs. Besant. She has sacrificed all that she could. What for? For the freedom of India."

—20 February 1918, *New India*

**LOKAMANYA B. G. TILAK**

"You have adopted India to be your Motherland; you have suffered a great deal for her, and found her almost triumphant. India is united for the commonweal, and all our efforts are directed towards reaching the goal of Swarāj. Our reception may not be as magnificent as from others you may have obtained. But I may assure you it comes from the inmost of our hearts. If India is nearer the goal, it is due to your strenuous efforts, and, if I may be allowed to add also, largely to your internment. Regarding you as an embodiment of our principles and our success, we offer you our welcome and wish you long life and inexhaustible energy."

—15 October 1917, *New India*

**POET RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

Calcutta, Sept. 22—Sir Rabindranath Tagore sends to the press a copy of the letter which he has written to a literary friend in England. In the course of the letter he writes: "In your letter you seem puzzled at my conduct in sending a message of sympathy to Mrs. Besant. I am afraid, compared with your own troubles, it may appear to you too small, but yet sufferings have not lost their keenness for us, and moral problems still remain as the gravest of all problems

in all parts of the world. The constant conflict between the growing demand of the educated community of India for a substantial share in the administration of their country and the spirit of hostility on the part of the Government has given rise, among a considerable number of our young men, to methods of violence, bred of despair and distrust. This has been met by the Government by a thorough policy of repression. In Bengal itself hundreds of men are interned without trial, a great number in unhealthy surroundings, in gaols and in solitary cells, in a few cases driving them to insanity or suicide. The misery that is carried into numerous households is deep and widespread. What I consider to be the worst outcome of this irresponsible policy is the spread of the contagion of hatred against everything western in minds which were free from it. In this crisis the only European who has shared our sorrow, incurring the anger and derision of her countrymen, is Mrs. Annie Besant. This was what led me to express my grateful admiration for her noble courage. Possibly there is such a thing as political exigency, just as there may be a place for utter ruthlessness in War ; but I pay my homage to those who have faith in ideals and, therefore, are willing to take all other risks except that of weakening the foundation of moral responsibility." (A.P.I.)

—25 September 1917, *New India*

## **MR. M. K. GANDHI**

"Cultivate the great qualities of Dr. Besant, namely, firmness, simplicity, self-control, etc. She is one of the greatest orators of the world, because she speaks what she believes and acts according to what she speaks . . . . She has the

courage of her convictions and always puts her words into action . . . Imitate her unflinching determination and simplicity of life . . . Obtain the same strength and indomitable will that she possesses which alone will bring Swarâj. India is not fit for Swarâj without these qualities. Remove India's chains and then alone will we achieve our goal. Religion is interwoven in Dr. Besant's life and she has built a bridge between politics and religion. Swarâj without religion is of no use. It is Dr. Besant who has awakened India from her deep slumber and I pray that she may live long to witness a free India."

—2 October 1928, *New India*

## DR. BESANT ANSWERS

I do not know what I can say for the over-generous words . . . I could not thank you sufficiently for your good thought of me, but I would pray you not to pitch your thought too high, for then you will expect what none can give. I am no incarnation . . . but only a servant of the mighty mother Shakti, who is embodied in no mortal body, but in the immortal body of India, the reflection of the Mother. I am only a poor instrument in far mightier hands, and you should no more praise me than you praise the chisel in the hands of the sculptor. The sculptor cuts the marble into some exquisite form of beauty. You praise the artist and not the tool. It is only then you will be safe from disappointment and you will be fit to follow the leadership not of any mortal leader, but of God and Mother India, for



they alone are worthy of your reverence. They alone are worthy of your trust. For me, I will do my best, but my great leader, Madame H. P. Blavatsky, said: "I am only the window through which the sun comes." Do not make too much of the glass through which the light of the moment happens to come . . . .

—December 1917

Sometimes I am inclined<sup>t</sup> to think that one ought to be congratulated on the opportunity of working, rather than be thanked for that which it is a privilege to be allowed to perform. The real leader is one who inspires others to work, whom we must all look to, to whom our worship should be paid: and to be allowed to be, in however small a degree, a Messenger of the Freedom of the Motherland and of her children seems to me a thing to be grateful for.

One point I would like to put before you. We speak of different people as our leaders. Let us remember that the strength of the leader lies in the number of those who strengthen his hands by working for the cause that he represents. The leader is rather like the banner of a regiment. He is a symbol, and his value depends on the number and courage of the regiment that follow the flag. Only as any one of us is able to make articulate that which is in your hearts, only as any one of us may be able to speak out that for which all of you are longing, of which all of you are thinking, only in that measure is his leadership strong, and only in that measure should any leader be trusted. To speak out what others are dimly groping after, to proclaim aloud what others are thinking, to say clearly what others

are whispering, that is the true function of the leader. He does not make the movement; it is the movement that makes him and puts him forward as a symbol of the whole of the movement of a nation. Only as we look on leaders in that light, as made by the movement and not as creators of it, shall we see a leader in the true light. Some people object to the movement, saying that an agitator has made it. No man can make a national movement; no man can make an agitation save where the people have a desire expressed in that agitation. And so it follows that the responsibility is really on you rather than on your leaders. They are strong by your strength, they are enduring by your endurance; wise by your wisdom, brave by your courage. It is the nation that is ready to be followed to be redeemed; and you and I are equally pledged to the service of the Motherland.

—16 April 1918, *New India*

We only ask that we may continue to serve you, and struggle side by side with you in this noble battle for freedom [said Dr. Besant to the vast assembly of Indians who gathered to ask her blessing after her release from internment]. I know that in my own case, and in the case of Mr. Arundale, our skins are not of the colour that gives the right to fight, but inasmuch as our Nation has done wrong in the past and denied freedom in the past; inasmuch as the Nation whose signature we bear on our skins has not given liberty here that it was her duty to give, we claim the right to stand for England as she really is and not as Anglo-India has made her. It is well that in this struggle some who were not India-born took part. Did not the father of the Congress wear a white

English skin ? Did you not have helper after helper of India's cause who were born in other countries ? While our skins are white, we have the Indian heart, the Indian devotion, and with all our hearts we thank you that you allow us to work side by side with you ; and though God had not given us the blessing of being India-born, we have won the right to be Indians by the gift of ourselves.

—24 September 1917, *New India*

So long as I can serve India, I shall continue to do so . . . . I love the Indian people as I love none other, and . . . my heart and my mind . . . have long been laid on the Altar of the Motherland.

—22 June 1918, *New India*

To have the glorious privilege of suffering for India is the crown of a life which has ever striven to stand for Truth and Freedom, I cannot deny in my old age the principles of my youth and maturity. Who shall deny to me the right to call myself a Child of the Motherland, when I suffer for her dear sake ? I have been one of God's messengers to India, and He has many more, greater and better than I, to send for her redeeming from bondage. " When half-Gods go, the Gods arrive."

—30 August 1916, *New India*

## **INDIA IS THE KEYNOTE**

In the midst of a Crisis, such as the present, every effort must be made by those who have the inner knowledge to carry through one of the greatest triumphs the world has ever known. Today is a supreme moment in the history of the world, and those who truly know must work from every

part of the world to what is a common end. Whatever you may be doing for the one, you must dedicate to the all. Try to perceive the Great Plan as a whole, however much you may be concentrated upon a particular part of it. It is all one Plan, and each part is but a part, however much it may seem to be a whole, all by itself.

India is the keynote. India is the centre of that great storm which shall usher in a splendid Peace. Wherever else you may be working, remember India, think of Her, know Her to be the true Hope of the Nations of the world. Think truly about India, without the slightest trace of race or creed or colour prejudice. Drive these away, and know India as She is, as She is apart from, above, those who happen to be Her sons for a while. They are not India. They are not the Mother. They are but the children, among Her children. Work for India as opportunity offers. You hasten the growth of all that is dear to you as you hasten the growth of India . . . . No one . . . will be careless of India's welfare, for the sake of the people of India ; but far more for the sake of all that India is, the mighty Power She is, as the veritable Holy Land of the World. Take away the people of India, and India remains. But help the people to become worthy of India.

—13 December 1928, *New India*

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We are standing on the threshold of a New Age. We are beginning the building of the foundation of the New World—or rather, we are the workers who are gathering together the materials for the building, to help the great Master-BUILDER in His building that part of the Temple of which the Great Architect has drawn the Plan. The Lord Vaivasvata MANU has His part of the Plan, and the coming world is the sixth department in that Plan of the Fifth Age. We can gather stones, we can bring the lime and the sand, and make the mortar, and prepare the tools for Him who lives in the far-off Himalaya.

-----*Presidential Address of 1921*

## *II. India's Age-Old Glories*

We are to seek for the Indian Ideals which flowered into the National Life. . . . Because there were so many in India who ever thought of [the] Supreme, therefore did India flower out into a civilization unrivalled in the depth of its Philosophy, the spirituality of its Religion, and in the perfection of its Dharma of orderly and graded Individual and National Life, expressing as none other has ever done that balance, that equilibrium, which is Yoga, that which saved her, when all the contemporaries of her splendid Nationality have been carried away by Time's tremendous rapids, and scattered as wrecks over the far horizon of the boundless Ocean of the Past. She shares their Past, but they do not share her Future, for not theirs the secret of her immortal Youth.

—1925, *Indian Ideals*

## “ THE INDIA I KNOW ”

WHEN I think of India, I think of her in the greatness of her past, not in the degradation of her present. . . . To me she is in very truth the Holy Land, the land whose great philosophy has been the source of all the philosophies of the Western world, the land whose great religion has been the origin of all religions, the mother of spirituality, the cradle of civilization. . . . I would win your thoughts [to] India unfallen, India as she was in her past, as she shall be in her future—mother once more in days to come, as in the days behind us, of art and of knowledge, mother of spiritual life and of true religion. That is the India I know ; that is . . . the India whose polity was built by King-Initiates, whose religion was moulded by Divine Men ; the India which even so late as five thousand years ago felt her fields trodden by the feet of Sri Krishna, which even twenty-four centuries ago heard her cities echoing with the sublime morality of the Buddha ; the India which later, when her great wars were over, had her poets who in the *Mahabhârata* and in the *Ramâyanâ* gave epic poetry to the world greater than that of Greece ; dramatists who in later times still left treasures of beauty that the learned in the West are just beginning to appreciate. That is the India . . . which . . . is to me the Holy Land. For those who, though born for this life in a Western land and clad in a



Western body, can yet look back to earlier incarnations in which they drank the milk of spiritual wisdom from the breast of their true mother, they must feel ever the magic of her immemorial past, must dwell ever under the spell of her deathless fascination ; for they are bound to India by all the sacred memories of their past ; and with her, too, are bound up all the radiant hopes of their future, a future which they know they will share with her who is their true mother in the soul life. . . . '

The uniqueness . . . of the Indian civilization . . . consisted in the fact that it was all framed for a spiritual purpose, planned to assist spiritual evolution. The State was framed to a spiritual end ; the family was built on a spiritual basis, the whole daily life was moulded to conduce to spiritual progress. . . . The social life was similarly organized, always for a spiritual end. Take the institution of marriage as you find it . . . amongst the early Aryan people. You find there side by side husband and wife, united in all the greatest things of life : the man, the priest of his household, the wife the priestess without whom the daily sacrifices could not be performed, and therefore without whom the duties of the household could not be carried on ; for the sacred household fire was only kindled by the bride and bridegroom, and without this there was no " household." . . . Every act of life [was] a religious service ; the very food . . . was . . . cooked ever as an offering to the Gods, and only secondarily as food for man ; hence very largely . . . the abstemiousness of the Hindu nation, all the life of which was to be founded on a spiritual ideal, and not on that of material luxury. . . .

Sleeping she is, and sleeping she will remain, until she turns back to that which inspired the literature of her past, to the philosophy and the religion of her greater days. Those only have in them the hope of her future, as they have in them the essence of her past. That is the hope for India that still burns hidden in some few faithful hearts, that hope of the re-awakening of India for which some still work and pray. . . . Out of that sublime teaching the greatness of her past was evolved. It was when her people thus believed, that India was great. . . . When once more in every Indian household are heard the teachings of the Vedas and the Upanishads ; when once more in every Indian household is understood the true meaning of the hymns and of the worship of the Supreme in the hands of the father and the mother of the household—then India will begin to wake from the sleep of centuries, and once more to hold up her head amongst the nations of the world. Her civilization—and this is significant—has lasted. None other has lasted, old as hers is old. She is the most ancient of all the Aryan peoples, the mother of all the sub-races of the Aryan nations. She was old when ancient Egypt was young ; very old when Assyria and Chaldæa were born. They have passed away and have left no traces save in their pottery and in their ruins. But India is still a people despite the divisions that degrade her, despite the quarrels that deny the brotherhood of her sons ; and she remains with the possibility of a nation because of her past, and because even in her present the ancient form remains . . . into which the spirit may again be poured. If her vessels were broken, then the water of life would be spilt in the pouring ; the vessels are there, polluted and

defiled as they are ; they can be cleansed, and the water of spiritual life can still be held in them, ay, and shall be held in them in the days to come.

—Lecture delivered 6 November 1893,

*The Birth of New India*

## **THE MANU—INDIA'S LAW-GIVER**

Of all the codes of human life that have ever been given to the world, that code which is known by the name of Manu, the great Law-Giver, is the most orderly and the most perfect in its arrangement.

The Manu as Law-Giver moulds the outer civilization whilst the Teacher gives a religious form suitable for the proposed outer polity. Thus the Manu is the great Law-Giver for the Aryan race and His code is contained in the *Manu Smriti*, the Institutes of Manu.

To the Aryan people the Manu gave its lands, its social polity and organization. He was a Divine King, a mighty Law-Giver, who saw not only with the eyes of matter but with the eyes of spirit and founded a Society on a basis which has lasted for tens of thousands of years and has not yet vanished from the face of the land. . . .

There is nothing more marvellous in ancient history than the way in which every great civilization of the past seems to have been born full-grown and not as an infant. . . . For the earliest civilizations evolved under tutelage and not, as western sociologists have imagined, by the pressure of external necessities. They were ruled by Divine Kings, mighty Initiates who gave laws to their nations and built up Society on the model of the family in which the elders ruled

with unquestioned authority and the youngers obeyed with submissive reverence.

It was a perfect socialism under autocratic rule. The well-ordered, well-guided family was then the model to which the State conformed. Each man had his status and his duties, and had no need to claim his rights, all that was due to him being paid as a matter of course. . . .

Now the fundamental ideal in Manu's polity for the Aryan race . . . is that of Duty. The fundamental thought of the people of the East has been the thought embodied in that one word Dharma (Duty). Every man has his Duty. But what does Duty mean? It means the obligations into which every man is born, the obligations which surround him from the moment of his birth. The obligations to the family, the obligations to the community, the obligations to the nation—these are the duties into which every human being comes by the gateway of birth. It is not an arbitrary thing but a natural one. It is not a thing which is created, but it is a thing which comes out of the long course of evolution.

Out of that fundamental idea of Duty comes the thought that the first thing in human life which makes it possible is the fact that that obligation is recognized and righteously discharged. Nothing is said about the rights of the individual, for each obtains his rights when all around him discharge their several duties. . . .

### ***The Four Great Functions***

The Manu of the Fifth Race based His social organization of the eldest sub-race on a recognition of types . . . known as the Caste System. He guided the souls highly evolved

in knowledge and dispassion to take birth as teachers and priests, those highly evolved in power as kings and warriors, others as merchants and traders, and others as artisans, labourers and servants. The caste system was based entirely on the ideal of Duty : the Duty of the learned to teach ; the Duty of the strong to protect ; the Duty of the organizer and the distributor of goods to distribute them ; and the Duty of the producer to produce. So that we have four great functions coming out in the National life : the Duty of the teacher ; the Duty of the protector ; the Duty of the organizer and distributor ; and the Duty of the producer of wealth. . . .

Today we need to hold up again the old ideal ; not to force any man to follow it, if he does not see it to be admirable. . . . When we are thus able to re-form a caste of teachers, a caste of legislators and administrators of justice, a caste of those who organize industry and accumulate wealth, a class of manual labourers who follow a particular craft, or a particular art which is needed for the welfare of the people—all equally honourable and equally necessary, and all equally essential to the nation's welfare ; and when the old idea of duty returns and each knows his duty and does it ; then shall we again make the golden age, and a happier day shall break upon our earth. For this is what the West is looking for today. It realizes its own turmoil. It realizes its own dislocation. It realizes that constant struggle cannot be the natural and the fitting state of man. It is gradually despairing of the feasibility of its methods, and is looking elsewhere for light. Where should the light come from ? From the East, where the Sun

is ever shining, where the laws of the Great Law-Giver were given to all His Aryan children, not only to those who settled in India, but to those who wandered Westward and lost their way to their father's home.

—October 1917, *The Ancient Indian Ideal of Duty*

## THE FOUNDATION OF THE STATE

Manu's laws are concerned with the inhabitants of a kingdom, their relationships, their offices, their functions, their duties, etc. The Family is the unit : " To be mothers were women created and to be fathers men " ; " Let mutual fidelity continue until death ; this may be considered as the summary of the highest law for husband and wife." . . . " He only is a perfect man who consists of his wife, himself, and his offspring. . . . The husband is declared to be one with the wife." . . .

To Manu we owe the luminous idea that all human societies, like a family, consist of elders, equals, and youngers, to each of whom special duties should be rendered, reverence to the elders, friendship to the equals, protection to the youngers, and on the due discharge of these, the happiness of all States depends. The State should be founded on the Family, and State obligations are enlarged family obligations. The profound principle which emerges from this fundamental idea that man only becomes man in the family, that Man, the truly *human* being, is not a separate man, but a husband-wife-child, raises Duty above Rights, obligations above claims ; it substitutes mutual helpfulness for competition, the law of sacrifice for the law of the struggle for existence. It is the recognition that man is a

social, not an isolated being, and that the State should be moulded in accordance with this natural law . . . Modern science reinforced [the] ancient teaching, and thus gave birth to Socialism. . . .

Only in the woman is the old ideal preserved, and her utter sacrifice to husband and son is apt to increase masculine selfishness. None the less, in her self-sacrifice lies the salvation of India. The future welfare of the Indian State depends on the re-establishment of the old ideal of the Family, with its mutual sacrifice, and mutual service, and mutual helpfulness, conditioned, in their form not in their essence, by the "elder, equal, and younger." . . .

—1919, *Lectures on Political Science*

## **SELF-GOVERNING INDIA**

If you go into Indian history at all, you will at once realize that the Nation that built up that history so many thousands of years ago, is a Nation with a typical life of its own. It is capable of steady and constant evolution today. You would realize that so far from the idea of Self-Government being a new idea, which has grown out of contact with Great Britain, which has gradually been adopted by the educated Indians because they have studied English History—you would find, on the contrary, that India was one of the most Self-Governing countries in the world, and that there still remains in village traditions in India the memory of a time when the people truly governed themselves. And if you study that, not only in the village communal life, but if you study the building up from the village to the ten villages, from the ten villages to the hundred villages, and so on,

grade after grade, until you come to the royal power, you would see in that the image of a Nation that was not only capable of Self-Government but that exercised Self-Government; you would realize that Kingship in India, powerful as it was, was powerful because the King was frequently elected by the people; because no great step was taken without the popular approval; because round the King there stood a Council, representing the various grades in the community over which the King was ruling. And you find as you read those old stories that, while the King was mighty, he was the King of a Free State, and you begin to realize that a great deal of the nonsense talked in modern times about India's incapacity for Self-Government is nonsense, and grows out of the ignorance of the people, and their utter lack of acquaintance with the past of their own great Nationality.

Moreover, if you study that history, you would find that customs had changed in the most extraordinary way. You would find, when you came to deal with the question of foreign travel, that India was once a great commercial country, manufacturing her own products, and sending them out in her own ships over the whole of the then known world; you would find that there was a great trade carried on with Europe along the borders of the Mediterranean; you would find your sailors sailing over the seas of the then known world, and carrying the products of Indian handicrafts over the whole of that then known civilized world.

.....Lecture delivered 1914, *The Birth of New India*



## DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

Lord Olivier falls into the common error of thinking that the West had to teach democracy to India. "Centuries of working in Europe and America"? But surely the earliest date in America is the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and in England it is not yet a century old; while democracy is "natural to India." "The East is the parent of municipalities." The "village republics" kept India prosperous, wealthy and free literally for millennia, and lasted up to 1816, with "a school in every village," as Sir Thomas Munro told the House of Commons in 1813. Sir Henry Maine has pointed out these Self-Governing institutions, and de Tocqueville saw in the similar local organizations in the American Colonies the surest foundation of National Liberty. India's local Governments kept India rich and strong, while Kings and Emperors played about at the top from time to time, and had their little wars while the peasants and craftsmen worked in peace. India wishes to build her own Constitution on the sure foundations of her past, and not to be given a bad copy of British democracy, evolved after feudalism and baronial and royal tyrannies. India kept her Kings in much better order than England did, and the Councils dethroned them when they became too troublesome. As Kautilya said in the fourth century B.C., "a King without a Council was like a cart with one wheel." You can only tell what India can be when you know what India has been in the past.

—6 March 1924, *New India*,

## RUSSIA AND INDIA—A COMPARISON

*Dr. Besant, commenting on an article of the above title, states :*

The writer, from a study of Autocracy followed by anarchy in Russia, and from the cant view of India accepted in the West, considers that India needs an autocracy, and that its destruction would be followed by anarchy here. He ignores the fact that Russia is in her first youth, and is in the process of building up a Nation out of very diverse constituents, not yet amalgamated. Her civilization has been imposed on her and is moulded on western ideas, alien to the various eastern and semi-eastern tribes which have been conquered but not assimilated. Remove this, and you are face to face with tribes of many types, incapable of aught save tribal order. "Scratch a Russian and you find a Tartar" is true.

What has such an embryonic Nation, with a veneer of alien civilization, to offer as matter for "a comparison" with India, the oldest of living civilizations?

Can these tribes of Eastern Europe and of Asia be compared with the Empires of the Pandavas, of Chandragupta, of Asoka, of the Mughals, to name but four out of the mighty Empires and Kingdoms that have risen and fallen in India during five thousand years? Are the tribal organizations to be compared with that of the many-aspected civilization which produced the Dharmashastras, the Arthashastras, the Philosophies, the Sciences, the Metaphysics, the Epics, the Dramas of India, to say nothing of the sublime Spirituality which gave the Upanishads to a wondering world? The West has dug at eastern sources for her limited supply of knowledge, and as to her civilization, when have any wars in India

spread the wide-stretching devastation, or shown the ghastly calculated cruelties we see in the Europe of today? India had hospitals many centuries before the West had any, but she has never produced men like the Christian savages who begged that they might have their religious processions undisturbed, while they bombed the churches and the hospitals of their fellow-believers, whelming the wounded, the nurses, the doctors, in one red rain with their bombs.

On the assumption that Russia and India are both child Nations, India being "more divided, less virile, and far less socially advanced than Russia," while she "has been infinitely more fortunate than Russia in having honest, capable and benevolent rulers" in her British officers, our writer considers that the disappearance of the British oligarchy would be a greater misfortune to India than the disappearance of the Tsardom to Russia. "Beyond all other countries, India is the land of one-man rule." "In the absence of official control, Municipal Government is apt to become a scandal and a farce unless there is one honest man to lead it." Yet historians trace to her village communities and municipalities the inception of the free institutions of the West. But what is history in the face of the overweening insular conceit of the writer? . . . Indians, it seems, have not "yet shown any marked capacity for managing their own affairs" in Municipalities; because they are hampered by officials there, but they surely show very great capacity in Indian States, the only places in which they are allowed to show it . . .

—14 June 1918, *New India*

## INDIA'S GLORIOUS CULTURAL TRADITIONS<sup>1</sup>

Lift your eyes to the Universities born on the Indian soil, breathing the Indian air, nourished by Indian traditions. . . . Set the example of the Ashramas and Sangams of the Hindu, the Viharas of the Buddhist, the Madrasahs of the Muslims. . . .

Wander with me for a short space in the forests of the Ashramas, the exquisite gardens of the Viharas, and let us see whether they do not present something that we may learn to utilize.

### THREE CULTURAL HERITAGES

- I. Vaidic or Hindu (dominant in the ancient period)
- II. Buddhistic (dominant in the middle period from fifth century B.C. to A.D. eleventh century)
- III. Islamic (dominant in modern period to A.D. nineteenth century)

### *Not Mutually Exclusive*

These great ages are not mutually exclusive, for Takshashila, the most ancient of the Hindu universities, lasted until its destruction in A.D. 455. Hindus went to Buddhist monasteries and universities and Buddhists learned from Brāhmana Sages. One king might be a Buddhist and his son an

<sup>1</sup> All quotations that follow, unless otherwise credited, are from Dr. Annie Besant's famous Convocation Address to the University of Mysore, delivered on 29 October 1924, and from *India: Bond or Free?* 1926, 1st Ed.

orthodox Hindu. Hindu Emperors loaded Buddhist monasteries with rich gifts. Every court had learned men belonging to both religions.

### *Learning Greatly Honoured*

In India the greatest and wisest of her Monarchs found in the promotion of learning their noblest and most beneficent achievement, and saw in the foundation of a University the most enduring memorial of their thrones. Learning in India has ever been regarded as greater than wealth and rank, the fillet of wisdom as more worthy of reverence than the jewelled diadem of Kings.

### *Nature the Keynote*

In the first two periods the Forest was the fountain-head of civilization. "There, trees and plants, rivers and lakes had ample opportunity to live in close relationship with men. In these forests, though there was human society, . . . there was no jostling. . . . The Indian mind . . . it rendered all the brighter. . . . The current of civilization that flowed from its forests inundated the whole of India." (Rabindranath Tagore)

Even after the forest period, Indian Universities were ever built in scenes of natural beauty, surrounded by lovely gardens, fragrant with blossoms and shady with trees, surrounded by a high wall, with guarded gates whereat the "entrance examination" was actually conducted. The site of an insignificant village may sometimes be selected because of its beauty.

### ***Who Became Cultured?***

Culture was an innate part of the life of the village, because education in literature and arts and crafts was centred in the Temple and its affiliated schools.

The Universities were attended by the “twice-born,” monarchs, nobles, leaders of the great merchant community, who carried their knowledge back to the village hearts of India. Some Universities held from 8,000 to 10,000 students.

The title *Kulapati* was given to him “who had fed, housed and taught 10,000 students.”

The sons of poor men earned their tuition by service to the University, or promised to pay their fees later. Some universities were so highly endowed that all tuition and living fees were waived.

Women had opportunities for attaining the highest cultural honours. One Ramachandramma, a poetess of extraordinary powers who could compose with equal facility in eight languages, was accorded the honour of *Kanaka-Ratna Abhisheka* (a bath in gold and gems), and by Court assent she occupied the position of “Emperor of Learning.”

### ***Subjects of the Curricula***

There were Scriptures of Literature, Science, Arts and Crafts, and the practice of Yoga. Much emphasis was laid on the study of medicine and law.

## **I. THE ANCIENT OR HINDU (VAIDIC) AGE**

*Centred in Forest.*

*Discipline—Raja Yoga.*

*Method.*—Meditation on a single aphorism until an understanding was reached, the goal being the stimulation of the originality and creative powers of the pupils rather than the injection of well-digested facts.

Not a single pie could the student retain in the great University of Takshashila, thus putting all students on a basis of common democracy.

### ***Subjects Taught***

The supreme literature—the *Upanishads* and the *Brahma Sutras*.

All subjects taught had as the ultimate goal—the release of the Self.

For example, the Classical Dance of India—Bharata Natya—was given with its wealth of symbolism to the Rishi Bharata as another 'Veda' which could be easily understood by all.

As early as the Epic Age, their worship of the great Planetary Devas brought to their discovery the position of the solstitial points and other important astronomical phenomena, which, without the aid of the modern instruments, they fixed to an astonishingly accurate degree.

The orientation to Brahma Vidya or the Supreme Wisdom was evidenced in a dialogue between the Rishi Narada and the Lord Sanat Kumâra :

“ O Lord, I have read the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda, fourth the Atharveda, fifth the Itihasa and Purana, Grammar, Rituals, the Science of Numbers, Physics, Chronology, Logic, Polity, Technology, the Sciences cognate to the

Vedas, the Science of Bhûtas, Archery, Astronomy, the Science of Antidotes and the Fine Arts (said by Sri Sankaracharya to be the Science of making essences, dancing, singing, music, architecture, painting, etc.).”

The Lord replied : “ All these that you have learnt are merely nominal.” (*Chhandogyopanishad*)

### ***Famous Institutions of Learning***

Takshashila, the most ancient Northern University near Rawalpindi, destroyed by the White Huns in A.D. 455.  
Nadiya, near Calcutta, existing as late as 1908.

The ancient South Indian Sangams :

the First Sangam of Madura lasting 16,149 years,  
the Second—3,700 years,  
the Third—1,850 years,

were examining bodies of culture, whose approval “ set the seal of authority on the works presented,” writes Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar. All aspired to the dignity of having their creative output marked as “ Sangam works.” The Rishi Agastya was a member of the First and Second Sangams, and through His authoritative grammar of the Age—*Agattiyam*—and His other works on all the great sciences and arts, He became the “ Father of Tamil Civilization.”

## **II. THE MIDDLE OR BUDDHIST AGE**

*Centred* in Garden Monasteries and Universities.

*Discipline*—Monastical (Gnana Yoga—The Yoga of Wisdom).

*Method*—Meditation, Study, and Discussion.



### *Subjects Taught*

Brilliant results were achieved in Astronomy in this age. Its curricula included Logic, Grammar, Philosophy and Metaphysics, History, Arithmetic, Geometry, Samskrit, Pali, Music, and Tantrik Medicine. The sacred books of all religions were studied.

### *Famous Institutions of Learning*

Nālandā, on the bank of Gangā, to the south-east of Pataliputra (new Patna) and north of Rājagriha, was built by four successive Kings, being completed by King Bālditya in the fifth century A.D. on the spot chosen by Arya Deva at the behest of his Guru Nāgârjuna in A.D. 300.

Here all the ten thousand Buddhist monks, novices and other students were lodged and supplied with every necessity. Their power of debate and discussion was famed everywhere. Students travelled to Nālandā for postgraduate instruction not only from all parts of Asia but from Europe as well.

This Monastery was set in an exquisitely beautiful garden. "All around pools of translucent water shone with the pearls of the blue lotus ; here and there the lovely kanaka trees hung between them. . . . The pavilions had . . . beams resplendent with all the colours of the rainbow, rafters richly carved . . . and roofs covered with glazed tiles of brilliant colours, which multiplied themselves by reflection," writes Hiouen-Tsang who visited the monastery A.D. 629-45.

Royal University of Vikramasila, founded by King Dharmapala of Gauda in the eighth century A.D. on the bank of Gangā, near Bhagalpur, flourished for four centuries and

was destroyed with those of Nālandā and Odantapuri. In 1203 the final centres of Buddhist culture were wiped out by the Muslim Invasion.

### III. ISLAMIC CULTURE, THE MODERN AGE

Muhammad, the great Prophet of Arabia, set the ink of the scholar above the blood of the martyr; and it is well known that the torch of Science was carried aloft by Islam during the period of the dark ages of Europe. The destruction of the Universities and Temple schools by even the greatest fanatics of the tenth century was due to the fact that the followers of the Prophet abhorred images and image-worshippers, though themselves revering learning.

Sultans were ardent patrons of learning. Writes Sultan Firuz (1341-88): "I built many Masjids, Colleges, and Monasteries that the learned and the elders, the devout and the holy, might worship God in these edifices and aid the kind builder by their prayers. The digging of canals, the planting of trees, and the endowing with lands are in accordance with the directions of the Law."

In the height of the Islamic period great toleration for all religions was shown. Libraries of Hindu Shastras were translated by Hindu Pandits for the good of all, the mingling of the cultures developing Hindustani. Akbar's reign (A.D. 1566-1605) is especially marked for its toleration. "Sufis, doctors, preachers, lawyers, Sunnis, Shias, Brāhmanas, Jains, Buddhists, Charbakas, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and learned men of every belief" argued on "profound points of science, the curiosities of history, the wonders of nature."

*Centred in the Imperial Courts*

*Method—Study and Discussion*

***Subjects Taught :***

Akbar improved the gradation of the subjects taught, the Curriculum being :

Morality, Arithmetic, Accounts, Agriculture, Geometry, Longimetry, Astronomy, Geomancy, Economics, the Art of Government, Physics, Logic, Natural Philosophy, Abstract Mathematics, Divinity and History—a graded order from the study of Righteousness to Divinity and Manhood. Progress in the Arts and Crafts—music, painting, architecture—was very noted in Akbar's reign.

***Famous Institutions of Learning***

The world-renowned Madrasahs, such as that at Firazabad, the Firuz-Shahi Madrasah, and the Qudam Sharif Madrasah, were housed in very beautiful and spacious buildings in which rich colour and ornamentation were evident everywhere. Education and student maintenance were State-endowed. Universities were centres of bounty and service to the community.

**WHITHER INDIA'S GLORIOUS CULTURAL TRADITIONS ?**

***What fed these great Universities of India's Past ?***

The learning acquired in the village schools in which education began at five or six and was continued in its literary aspect to sixteen, at which time the student either went to the University, or became apprenticed to village craftsmen and agriculturists.

### ***Why Has Indian Education Perished?***

Indian education did not die when the White Huns destroyed the great University of Takshashila in A.D. 455.

Indian education did not die when the Muslims with their horror of images destroyed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries both Hindu and Buddhist Universities that contained them.

Indian education did not die in these two great destructions, because universities might come and go, but the village system, the roots and trunk still lived.

Indian education was not meant to die when Britain came to India, for the design which has been partially fulfilled was that the youngest son should disseminate far and wide the glory of the Mother of the Nations of the world.

Indian education perished only when the Village System with its industries, its common ownership in land, and co-operative endeavours, its education in the mother-tongues, was destroyed.

### ***The Renaissance***

Indian education can only live when it is again rooted in the very soil of the Indian Village. Restore the Village Panchayat or small Republic—that truest of all democracies, give back to the village its land, and its power to deal with its own internal problems, and again will there grow up generations of young Indians trained in an education of the hand, the heart, and the head, through which will be expressed the heritage of the Motherland :

### ***Creative Spirituality***

Some day from China, at peace and free, we may learn a little more of the ancient history of India, for China sent her countrymen there from time to time, and it is from their writings that we know very much of Indian prosperity under Indian rule.

—18 August 1928, *New India*

## THE ARYAN TYPE

Character lies at the root of outward conduct as well as at the root of inner aspirations and the nations of the world have each their characters, the groundwork of the national type. These types, taken together, form the Humanity of the age, and constitute its various elements, and in judging the outer social form of any people, it is necessary to understand it as being an expression of national character, slowly moulded from within. Changes may be made which are consonant with the national character, and such grafts will grow and will affect the parent stock to some extent, but grafts of too alien a type will only perish.

The primary Aryan type was of a distinctly marked character, and the feeble remnants that remain of that glorious type bear witness even yet to something of its beauty and its grace. It was a type preeminently spiritual, and the social polity that was its natural expression was moulded to give effect to spiritual ideas and to subordinate the lower nature to the higher, so that the nation might be a school of Souls, and the growth and the development of the Soul might be on every hand aided and encouraged. From this past it has resulted in the present that India, even in her present low estate, despite the loss of spiritual life and

the almost complete extinction of spiritual fire, yet remains the one country in the world where to put the Soul first, high above all material interests, is not regarded as a madness; the one country where spirituality still hovers in the very atmosphere, and where external surroundings help the Soul to rise instead of fettering it to earth.

But apart from its lofty spirituality, there is another aspect of the Aryan life which, at the present time, is of pressing importance. The Aryan type was one of unbending rectitude, of high morality, and those who would fain see Aryan spirituality again lift its head in the future, will do well to turn their attention now to Aryan virtues, and to try and revive these in the life of the householder.

Out of the spirituality grew reverence to parents, teachers, and elders. Reverence to the gods translated itself in the family and social life into reverence for the parents, who gave and nourished the physical life, for the teacher who gave and nourished the inner life—the second birth—for the aged, whose ripe wisdom served as guide and who handed on the ancient traditions. . . .

From reverence sprang courtesy, respecting others and self-respecting; the gracious courtesy which has stamped itself on the bearing of all classes and, even yet, serves as a pattern of the manners that “are not idle,” and that make the wheels of life run smoothly. Then came hospitality, the guest to be honoured as a God, hospitality freehanded and generous-minded, a duty ungrudgingly done; and its sister, charity, so that none might starve while others had enough, not yielded as a legal dole but given gladly, for the householder was the steward of the nation and none of the

nation's children must go unfed. Reverence, courtesy, hospitality, charity, these were the social virtues of the Aryan householder that rendered him so gracious a type.

But these would not have availed to build the Aryan character, lovely as they are, had there not been laid as a foundation, the bed-rock of Truth. Never might Aryan utter a lie; never might Aryan lips be stained with falsehood. Rigid fidelity to the pledged word, undeviating accuracy, these were taught by sacred precept, by lofty example, and this supreme virtue of Truth—without which all else must wither and perish—so wrought itself into the life of the nation that even now some Indian methods remind us of a time when an Aryan's word was his bond. . . . Would that every Aryan boy would make a vow in his heart to keep truth unstained, for he would by keeping truth do more to serve the nation than if he shone out as a brilliant light in the scholastic, legal, or political worlds!

Courage walks hand-in-hand with truth, and fearlessness was a distinguishing characteristic of the Aryan type; fearlessness, which has tenderness for its other aspect, for only those who hurt none need fear none. Pain inflicted is a prophecy of future pain to be endured, for the Great Law swings unerringly, and to every act of wrong brings its meed of pain. Therefore is harmlessness the highest Dharma, and therefore read we of "the fearless Brahman."

If India is again to hold up her head among nations, India's younger children must begin to lay the foundation in their own lives, of the Aryan type of character. The virtues

that I have mentioned were its most pronounced attributes and the revival of these among the Aryan youth would presage the rebuilding of the Nation. Character makes destiny, and Indian destiny depends on Indian character. Here is work for the young whose hearts burn with love for the Motherland, for on the altar of pure morality alone can fall the fire from Heaven which changes the fuel of aspiration into spiritual flame.

—Article written 9 December 1896, *India*

## **INDIA—THE IMPERISHABLE**

India is a continuum, and her Aryan civilization an unbroken whole. There are invasions and conquests, periods of strength and weakness, of unity and division, in her aeonian story. But she is always India; always Aryan, the MOTHER Imperishable,\* who has borne uncounted millions from her womb, but at whose own birth no historian can guess, whose death no prophet can foretell. And this it is well to remember in our judgments of today. With an admitted history of nearly 5,000 years, from the commerce between India and Babylon . . . and the proofs of high civilization and wealth then existing; with an admitted literature of least 7,000 years; the period of English rule in India, barely a century and a half, is microscopically small, a tiny ripple on her ocean. Invasions flow and ebb; conquerors come and go; India assimilates what is left of them, is the richer for them, and remains herself. She did without England for millennia, and flourished amazingly; she could do without England for millennia to come; but the two need each other, and will be the better for each other in



the near future, and India desires to be linked with England in that future, but on a footing of perfect equality, and on none other.

—1915, *A Bird's Eye View of India's Past as the Foundation for India's Future*.

## HER NATIONHOOD

What is it . . . that makes a Nation? It is, as with other Individuals, a fragment of God Himself, a Jivatma, a living Self, with innate qualities which gradually appear and form its *Character*. Contrast the Indian and the Englishman, and you will see the difference in the National Character: the Indian, spiritual, courteous, polished, keenly intellectual, inclined to philosophy and poetry, with an acute sense of duty, of obligation, to his surroundings; the Englishman, somewhat blunt and abrupt, strong mentality, scientific and practical, public-spirited. Climate, environment, social customs, all act on physical peculiarities, and through them on character also. A Nation is distinctly an Individual with a Character, and that character depends on the nature of the Spirit at its core, and its gradual unfolding to play its part in humanity as a whole. It draws into itself and assimilates all that is congruous with its inner Self, its Spirit, and it is the Spirit that unites, that harmonizes, that evolves the Nationality which embodies it. Anything special may go, only mutilating the National body, but if all goes, the Spirit must find another home. . . .

If India still survives all who were her contemporaries five thousand years ago, it is because the same Spirit lives in her National body as lived in it then; she has passed

through many valleys of humiliation, but never has she entered the valley of the shadow of death ; she has been invaded, and has assimilated her invaders ; her 'ethnic type, the Aryan, still survives in a minority, though she has wrought into it many others ; her ancient language is still living, although it has given birth to many dialects which have become great languages ; her Governments have changed their forms, and she has passed through periods of local, but only local, anarchy, and today she is renewing her youth like the phoenix, and from the pyre of temporary subjection she is arising, the same Nation, but purified, enriched, to a future greater than her past.

—1918, *Lectures on Political Science*

## HER BIRTHRIGHT

To India, root-stock of the mighty Aryan Race, were committed those treasures of spiritual wisdom which are held by her for the healing of the Nations, and also the fundamental principles of man in Society, on which alone can be built a civilization which shall endure. She has vindicated her birthright by her long existence as a Nation ; contemporary with Babylon the Mighty, she is yet alive and pulsing with new life today. Not in tombs is India to be sought, but in the full glare of modern life.

Nor in mere length of existence is her title to glory, but in the fulfilled treasures of her splendid Past ; she was a wealthy trader, sending her ships over the seas, heavy-laden with precious cargo, two thousand years before Hiram of Tyre sent to Solomon his cedar trees, and fir trees, and gold ; so well cared-for and well irrigated were her lands,

that her villagers raised on them two and sometimes three crops a year; mighty were her warriors, her kings, her statesmen, her republics, kingdoms and empires, and Alexander felt the strength of her free citizens when he was turned back, the ever-victorious, and found the end of his conquests in that strength.

World-famous are not only her philosophers, from whom Plato and Pythagoras sought to learn their wisdom, but also her poets and her dramatists, her artists and her craftsmen, her astronomers, her mathematicians, her architects.

Surely India, with such a past, has some message for the modern world, some spiritual inspiration, some principles of civic polity, which are the secret of her long-continued life.

## **A TOMORROW OF UNRIVALLED GLORY**

*Under the title of "Educative Work for Home Rule," Dr. Besant's sets forth the greatness of India and her ancient institutions. In the sixth article of this remarkable series, 13 February 1917, "New India," she says:*

The general impression of India given by such a survey as is afforded by the *Arthashastra* is of a vast country, presenting many varieties of forms of government, making many experiments, discussing with keen interest many political problems, a country throbbing with life and thought, wealthy, happy, free, and prosperous. We realize that her mighty spiritual literature, her philosophy, her epics, grew out of a soil rich in civilization, material and intellectual, as well as spiritual; that India was a land, oldest of living Nations, whose splendid yesterday promises a tomorrow of unrivalled glory.

# *III. India's Awakening*

THE WARRIOR SOUNDS A CLARION CALL

## ANNIE BESANT THE AWAKENER

"In 1897, prominent long before the Home Rule movement was started, hers was one of the very first voices raised to plead the cause of the brown race as against the white. If one contribution has been made by her more noteworthy and more important than another, it is that assertion of the equality of human rights, the rousing of the self-respect of our race, and constant reiteration of the principle, not for the purpose of elevating us temporarily to a sense of false security or false arrogance, but to evolve *political evolution* in this country. . . .

"I am not one of those who are unaware of the services done by the Congress and by the Congress leaders, but consider what has been done in the last few years—the wave of activity, galvanic activity that has run through the country and aroused the self-respect, aspirations and ideal of the people. To whom is all that due? It is due to Mrs. Besant who, scorning leisure and ease and travails and turmoils and position, has transcended the difficulties of race that is not ours, of a breeding that is not ours, of a culture that has become hers. She is one of us, she is Indian more than any of us, and it is to that Indian quality in her you owe the galvanic activity you see around you whether in politics, social service or educational work. I pay my tribute to her on that account."

—14 December 1918, (Sir) C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar

## TO AROUSE THE INDIAN WILL

IT is said—I know truly—that the Indian will has been asleep and has not roused itself to carry out its thought, but it also was said by a keen English observer that the reason why the Indian will is sleeping is that there is nothing great enough to rouse it into life, and that is true, for as long as you put before India jewels and gold, rank and titles, those cannot stir the Indian will to rouse itself and carry out that wish, but today there is before India an ideal to rouse that will into mightiest power, because it is the ideal of a mighty Nation that has claimed to itself its own strength to reign. We have been told that, where that will is present, it must achieve its victory ; and it is a dream that has inspired and aroused the will—the dream of India one and indivisible, the dream of India mighty among the Nations of the earth once more. The dreamers have seen it and you shall achieve it.

—1917, *New India*

## AT THIS VITAL MOMENT

For many long years past I have urged on you, and on those like you in all parts of India, the necessity of a spiritual awakening before the awakening of a material prosperity became possible. . . . In the past I have sometimes traced

for you the steps of India's descent ; how from the time of her great spirituality, when the life of the Spirit was seen as the sun in the heavens, how from that time downwards, with the decay of spirituality, went also the decay of the desirable things. And I remember how often I have pressed upon you how first there came the lessening of the spiritual life, then the decay of the original side of intellectual thought, of the creative intelligence, and only when those had gone far down into the twilight, came the slow decay of material prosperity. . . . The awakening, the reviving, of Indian life must follow the order in which the descent has gone. First of all, the reviving of true spirituality, of true religion, of the vital understanding of the profoundest truths of all existence ; then, after that had made its way to an appreciable extent, must come the training, the culture, the guidance of the intelligence, so that a wisely planned and wisely guided education might train the future workers of the land. I remember saying to you that when the spiritual life has again become potent, when the educational life has again become pervasive, then only can material prosperity safely return. . . .

In a rightly directed education lies the only way of training for the Motherland citizens who will be worthy of her past and therefore capable of building her future ; out of that will arise all the varied activities of a full and rich national life, and we shall see the nation, which India never yet has been, but which India shall be in the days that are dawning. . . .

To our eyes, looking with purblind vision, we should sometimes be almost inclined to say that events are travelling in

India a little more rapidly than is well. For we need for the wise guiding of a material movement men trained from boyhood in religion and in true wisdom, so that the brain may be balanced and calm, the hands strong and steady ; for the moment you touch the popular mind and the popular heart you awaken forces that are apt to go beyond the control of wisdom, and it needs a nucleus of wise and steady thinkers in order that a popular movement may find its way aright.

Let us, then, at this moment of immense importance to India's future, consider what ought to be the line most wisely to be followed in the great rush which is coming upon us. . . .

We know that . . . India's Deva-King . . . stands high above the nation and works out, millennium after millennium, the parts which are given to Him for His nation to play in the world's history ; these parts have outlined the nation's story through all the difficulties, the dangers, the humiliations of the past. . . . First of all, in order that India might again take her place amongst the nations of the world, mightier even than in the past—a glorious past—there came the spiritual messengers, the messengers who were to revive the varied religions of the land. . . .

—Lecture delivered 1910, *The Birth of New India*

## **THE ROOTS OF INDIA'S NATIONAL MOVEMENT**

Before the great National movement, we had a great religious movement, paving the way for more external manifestations. You may go back to the roots of this National movement to those days of Raja Ram Mohun Roy, who was



the first great modern Indian leader to arouse the Nation to a sense of the greatness of its past and of the possibilities of its future. He created the Brahma Samâj which later split into two movements, one rather more tending to the lines of western thought than the other. Then there was the Arya Samâj where the great Indian teacher, Dayanand Sarasvati, threw the Nation back upon the Vedas, and proclaimed the greatness of the eastern civilization. After that movement came The Theosophical Society, which proclaimed that in the East was the fountain of religious thought and that the great teachers of religion had found in the East their birthplace; and then to complete that cycle of religious evolution, you had the Ramakrishna Mission, with its fiery apostle, Swami Vivekananda, who was great as a religious teacher but no less great as patriot, who struck the note of Indian manhood, of Indian pride, and inspired especially the youth of India to accept self-sacrifice for the sake of the Motherland. Even so hostile a critic as Sir Valentine Chirol honoured me with the statement that when a European woman came to India and said that the West had nothing to teach of religion to the East, she led the people of India to believe that India was superior to Europe, and so even those who are hostile to Indian Nationality confess that in religion lies its root, confess that the Nation was reborn in the bosom of its religion, and that the roots of Nationality are struck deep into the heart of man.

—10 February 1917, *New India*

## HOW ANNIE BESANT WROUGHT FOR INDIA'S FREEDOM

[The following articles of this Section—India's Awakening—are taken from the magnificent appeals Dr. Besant made both to India and Britain alike to arouse themselves to the splendid destiny that awaited them as a World-Commonwealth of the East and the West. Her ringing Clarion-Call awoke India from the sleep of centuries. Her cry for Justice to India made every true Briton yearn to set the Motherland free. If today we here in India have the definite pledge of Self-Determination after the War, such as it is, we can only give homage to her who strove with her heart's blood and her soul's will for India's right to Self-Expression.]

### ON LIBERTY

I crave for every man, whatever be his creed, that his freedom of conscience be held sacred. I ask for every man, whatever be his belief, that he shall not suffer, in civil matters, for his faith or for his want of faith. I demand for every man, whatever be his opinions, that he shall be able to speak out with honest frankness the results of honest thought, without forfeiting his rights as citizen, without destroying his social position, and without troubling his domestic peace. . . .

Liberty is immortal and eternal, and her triumph is sure, however it may be delayed . . . and hers is also the triumph of tomorrow if only we who adore her, if only we can be true to ourselves and to each other. But they who love

her must work for her, as well as worship her, for labour is the only prayer to Liberty, and devotion the only praise. . . .

—1883, *Civil and Religious Liberty*

I have . . . learned much of the Divine Plan, and know that Victory is sure, however dark the passing clouds that veil the Sun. As surely as no thickness of earth-born clouds can put out the Sun, so surely can no folly and no crime put out Liberty, though they may delay for a while its rays from falling upon a portion of the globe.

—4 November 1925, *New India*

## WHO IS A PATRIOT?

What does a patriot mean? It means a man who realizes his own country and who loves that country above all else on earth. The patriot is not a man who looks to another country as though it was the centre of the Universe. He must look to his own country, his own people, those who are ~~born~~ on the land on which he himself was born, and the only Indian patriot is the man who loves India first and foremost above every other country. . . . The first thing a man must be loyal to is his own country. . . .

I would ask you to realize that life without liberty is a poor and contemptible thing. But until a man respects himself, until he will not bear an insult, until he is able to hold up his head in the air and declare that he is a man equal to other men on the earth—without such freedom there cannot be greatness either of aspirations or of achievement. And so I would urge on you to think of liberty day after day, meditate on her, long for her, feel her absence as you would feel the absence of the one dearest to you in

all the world, that your heart may ever be aching since that liberty is not yours. You should realize that liberty is the one great Devi without whom no country is worth the name of a Nation and, when you feel that, you will have to cry out for it, and then you will be seen by the world as worthy of the freedom you are demanding and liberty will come to your arms.

—17 June 1918, *New India*

## A MESSAGE TO INDIA

*From the President of the Indian National Congress to the People of India :*

Brothers and Sisters—We are living in a time when great changes are being made all over the world. And, as a result, methods are adopted which have the heroic simplicity and directness of the elder times. Our Viceroy, the Representative of our beloved King-Emperor, remembering his Sovereign's words that sympathy was lacking in the Indian administration, has come out from his aloof isolation, and, like an ancient King, is travelling round these immense dominions, to discover for himself what the people want. And with him comes from far-off Britain a special Messenger from the Throne itself, one of His Majesty's Ministers, to bring us the Emperor's Love and Justice : Love, that shall win us to forget what we have suffered ; Justice, that shall offer to us the Rights which other Peoples have had to wrench by force from the fast-closed fists of Sovereigns less wise, and less observant of the high Dharma of a Nation's Ruler.

What does this Justice mean to the highly educated classes of the Indian people ? It means that they will have

power placed in their hands to carry out the resolutions which they have been passing in the National Congress for three-and-thirty years. They will pass an Elementary Education Bill which, in the words of the Japanese Emperor, will leave no ignorant family in a village, no ignorant member in a family. They will so deal with the tariffs that the bounties given exclusively to India by Nature will bring to her from foreign Nations the wealth she needs to improve her own people, for the advantages given by Nature should fall back upon the people as fertilizing rain on the parched field. They will abolish the coercive legislation which has been invented to crush out expressions of righteous discontent, discontent due to the wrong methods and mistakes inevitable under the rule of a foreign bureaucracy, alien in language, customs, habits, from the people whom they rule. To the highly educated classes, Justice means heavy responsibility and strenuous exertion, with the joy of rendering happy and prosperous the people from whom they have sprung, the relatives in hundreds of thousands of villages in which their ancient families have lived for uncounted generations. "Born of the people, how should they not serve the people?," for India has no classes, separated from each other by dividing gulfs, such as exist in the West between the noble in the castle and the peasant in the cottage.

What does Justice mean to the active, out-of-door class, the class that, if poor, now goes into the Army and the Police, or, if noble, would go into them if they offered a career to Indians, the inborn warrior class, that is restless

and discontented, because its surging energies seek action? To them, often now the "naughty boys" of families, it opens up a career suited to them, in an Indian Army and Navy and Police, composed of Indians and officered by Indians, in which the bravest and the best disciplined, showing powers of leadership, shall have an open road to the highest posts of command, the very qualities which now cause disturbance being yoked to service of the Motherland, her protectors against foreign aggression, her guardians against disorder within.

What does Justice mean to the merchant class? It means markets in which wealth shall repay exertion, in which Lakshmi Devi, the Angel of Plenty, shall crown the labours of her servants. The class which guides and co-ordinates industry, gathering together its products and distributing them over India and over the whole world, which shall welcome into its ranks the shrewd brains and keen insight scattered over India, like jewels embedded in matrices of lesser value—this class shall be the steward and distributor of the wealth of the Nation, the backbone of National prosperity. Into it shall flow of those whose inborn talents fit them for this great branch of National Service, on which, more perhaps than on any other, the general prosperity of Nations ever depends.

What does Justice mean to the huge masses of the people, now toiling without hope, and suffering without relief, the masses who now labour that others may enjoy, who create wealth which they do not share, the producers, whether of food, or of articles of necessary use, or of pleasure? They see the food stream outwards while their families are left

hungry, the products of their hands going to others while their cottages are void of comfort. To them Justice means that the labourers' food and seed for the next sowing shall be the first charges on the crops his toil has raised ; that the Panchayat shall be re-established, so that he shall manage his own village business ; that the village officials shall again be village servants instead of village tyrants ; that he shall have replaced in his village the village school, teaching his boys and girls that they may become more clever and useful in village life ; and that any boy or girl cleverer than others may be able to go on to higher schools, a way being opened also from these to the University, less painful and hard than that now existing.

For what is Justice ? It is giving to every man his birth-right, and that birthright is Freedom, Swarâj, Home Rule.

Friends, will you work with my coileagues and myself to win this Home Rule, which will make India happy within ~~her~~ her own borders, and great among the Nations of the world ? Will you not work with us for your own liberty, and for the liberty of your children after you ? India is linked with Great Britain by the good Will of God, who would knit East and West together for the welfare of the whole world. The tie is now a tie of force ; let us make it a tie of love. But a tie of love can only come when India is free, a willing Partner in the Empire, and not a Dependency. Stand up like men ; speak out like men. Then shall your voices, ringing across the ocean, reach Britain, the Mother of free institutions in the West, and she will greet a sister, India, the Mother of free institutions in the East, who sent out to the West her sons and daughters to build up freedom there.

so that now, together, they might build a mighty Commonwealth of Free Nations, and bring happiness to mankind.

—26 December 1917, *New India*

## A MESSAGE TO BRITAIN

TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT OF GREAT  
BRITAIN AND TO THE SUPREME GOVERNMENT  
OF INDIA

*As Britain deals with India, so will the High  
Gods deal with her.*—July 1915, *The Theosophist*

The time is a time for grave and weighty decisions, decisions that affect the future not only of Great Britain, India and the Empire, but of the World. The war has reached a critical stage, and plain speech is necessary, alike on the part of Great Britain and of India, if the Empire is to triumph over her enemies, if Liberty is to triumph over Force, Law over Autocracy. In the working of Providence, who guides the destinies of Nations, Great Britain and India have been brought together, and have lived side by side for 160 years. The union has brought both gain and loss to both: gain to India, by being brought into contact with a liberty-loving and progressive western Nation; gain to England by an immense increase of wealth and impetus to commerce; loss to India by the destruction of her power of self-defence, and by her becoming a dependency instead of a number of warlike, wealthy, and independent States; loss to England by the clouding of her principles in the adoption of autocracy, and by the consequent lowering of her status in the world's eyes. The Arms Act of 1878 completed



India's subjection and helplessness ; and in the moment of the Empire's need, she finds herself in danger of invasion from Central Asia as in the old days, but of Central Asia dominated by Germany, and herself without her old power of self-defence.

Yet the old martial spirit is not dead, as is shown by her soldiers in the present war. Bengal has shown the capacity of her young men for quickly becoming soldiers. And the spirit Bengal has shown exists all over India, even outside the so-called martial races. Can that be called out now for the defence alike of India and the Empire ? Is it too late to evoke the spirit that sprang up in 1914, and was rejected ?

We believe it is not even yet too late ; but that which Mr. Lloyd George said of Ireland is equally true of India. We cannot ask young men to fight for principles, the application of which is denied to their own country. A subject race cannot fight for others with the heart and the energy ~~with~~ which a free race can fight for the freedom of itself and others. If India is to make great sacrifices in defence of the Empire, it must be as a partner in the Empire and not as a Dependency. Let her feel she is fighting for her own freedom as well as for the freedom of others, that she will have her place as a Free Nation in a Commonwealth of Free Nations under the British Crown ; and then she will strain every nerve to stand by England to the last.

For this there must be mutual trust. His Majesty's Government has already promised Responsible Government to India. Let full Responsible Government be established in India within a definite period to be fixed by Statute, and a Bill to that effect be introduced into Parliament at once ;

let India's leaders be taken into confidence now, and treated as recognized sharers in the perils and triumphs of the struggle ; let the Governor-General and the Secretary of State for India say to the leaders of the people what they want ; let us all feel that we are one in heart and aim, that we are not servants fighting for our masters, but free men fighting beside free men for a common heritage of Freedom.

—1918 Congress, Delhi

## ***TRUST US !***

We do not want to break our tie with England ; we do not want to see it broken by a War into which she entered in defence of liberty ; we detest German tyranny and German methods ; the policy of Great Britain has made it impossible for us alone to defend our own frontiers and our own coasts ; we do not want to change masters, but to ~~share~~ their freedom, and to live in the happy union of equals, for mutual advantage.

We are ready to make sacrifices ; we are ready to fight and work in India as Englishmen and Englishwomen are fighting and working in England, but it must be for a similar reason ; we must work and fight to win liberty, the prize of victory, as they work and fight to keep the liberty they won in past generations. Responsible Government is promised, but the promise is indefinite, hangs floating in the air. Let England pledge herself definitely to redeem that promise by accepting here, as in Ireland, that which our leaders have asked, in Congress and League assembled ; and we will work heart and soul to save Britain, India, and the Empire ; we will triumph with her, or we will go down with her in a world

ruin. Do not misunderstand us. We shall try to help Britain in any case, for we cannot forget the ties of many years ; and we believe that, in the immediate future, liberty stands or falls with the British Empire. But, if Britain refuses us our place in the Empire, we shall try as leading a forlorn hope. Whereas if Britain welcomes us as a Nation whose freedom depends upon the issue of the struggle, we feel sure that we shall win. Only the hope of freedom can arouse popular enthusiasm to the fighting point. Let not the reactionary British politicians prevail at this moment, and thus ruin the Empire. Trust us, and we will not fail you. Be true to us, and we will be true to you. Do not ask us to give everything, while you give nothing, to trust you while you distrust us, and try to use us for your own advantage only. Drill us, arm us, officer us with our own countrymen, make us a huge citizen army, and take if you will, the flower of our troops to fight abroad. But let us fight under ~~the~~ banner of Liberty, for nothing less than the hope of that will nerve our men to fight and our women to sacrifice.

—*The Present Crisis*, published by the Commonweal Office

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***We claim liberty, not favour. We claim freedom—not the Goodwill of the Government. Freedom is the right of every human being and without the process of law none should have the power to take it.... Unless a Government is in sympathy with the legitimate aspirations, the legitimate desires of the people, then that Government in the presence of the true Justice of God has no right to govern.***

—1 January 1919, New India

## 1918 and 1942

*By the turn of the cyclic wheel we are back to a period comparable to those stirring days before the 1918 Armistice when Dr. Besant wrought valiantly for India's Self-Determination. The following gives the spirit of those days, equally applicable to these very days of 1942.*

*The President of The Special Congress called upon Mrs. Besant to move the third resolution, and she was received with a great ovation, as she ascended the rostrum. The Resolution runs thus :*

(a) That this Congress declares that the people of India are fit for Responsible Government and repudiates the assumption to the contrary contained in the Report on the Indian Constitutional Reforms ; (b) that this Congress entirely disagrees with the formula contained in the said Report that the Provinces are the domain in which the earlier steps should be taken towards the progressive realization of Responsible Government, and that the authority of the Government of India in essential matters must remain indisputable, pending the experience of the effect of the changes proposed to be introduced in the Provinces ; and this Congress is of opinion that a similar and simultaneous advance is indispensable both in the Provinces and the Government of India. . . .

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### *The War and Indian Aspirations are Closely Intertwined*

In the Report the Secretary of State and the Viceroy have remarked on the change of spirit which has come over the Indian Nation during the last few years. . . . Speaking of the War as one of the reasons for the change in the attitude

of the Nations, the Report says : " The War is far from being won. Unless it is won, India's political aspirations are a vain dream." We would call the attention of the Indian politicians to this obvious truth. I would like, speaking from this place, to call also the attention of His Majesty's Secretary of State and of H.E. the Viceroy to the equally obvious fact that, unless Indian aspirations are satisfied, the War will take a very long time before it is ended. We have spoken in our first resolution that we pray for a decisive victory and for the final vindication of the principles of freedom, justice, and self-determination, but the triumph of those principles means Self-Government in India, not only in European Countries or perchance in the African Colonies of Germany. Hence we would like these illustrious gentlemen to remember that it is true that the War and Indian aspirations are closely intertwined, and the more those aspirations are realized in fact, the swifter will the victory come and sit over the banners of the Allied troops.

### ***India's Unfitness for Self-Government Challenged***

It is asked, dealing with this matter, is India fit for Self-Government ? Many reasons are given why she should not be regarded as fit for Self-Government. It is said in Chapter 6 on the conditions of the problem that there are several serious defects which render India at present unfit for Responsible Government. We are told that we must remember what the working of a responsible institution involves. We are told that the electors send men to the Councils with power to act in their name ; that the Councils commit the power to the Ministers over whom they reserve

control in the form of the power of removing them from office. The elector controls his Government, because, if his representatives in the Council disapprove of a certain action, he can change his representative at the next election. Then it is argued that we have not sufficient electorates; that we have not developed the power of toleration in the majorities and patience in the minorities, and that the qualities are only developed by exercise and are effected by education, occupation, and social organization. It is because those qualities are only developed by exercise that India asks for a chance of developing them by the exercise of Responsible Government. (Hear, Hear.) If they are only developed by exercise, how are they to be developed here without exercise? If a man can only learn to swim by going into water, will he learn to swim by remaining on the shore? That is what these illustrious gentlemen suggest, namely, that you must not have Responsible Government because you have not the qualities; that the qualities can only be developed by exercise, and that you shall not have the exercise in order to develop the qualities. That is working in a very vicious circle, and we want to get out of it. Our answer is: England was not educated when she won her liberties in the great struggle between the Long Parliament and King Charles I. It is not a question of literary education and the percentage of literates as compared with the educated people in England. It is a question of manhood, a question of National dignity, and a question of pride in your own people and of the traditions of your Nation that make you fit.

### ***Are the Peasantry Illiterate ?***

When we are told here that the peasantry are illiterate, we say : Yes, but if we get Self-Government, we will make them educated and even different during a short time. Education does not depend entirely upon literacy. Education depends on what we call culture, tradition, inherited type of brain and heart that grows up in the midst of a great and free Nation. The peasantry of India are not uneducated people, although they are not literate in the ordinary sense of the term, and I appeal for that to history.

Is it not from India that the Nations of the West found their Self-Governing Institutions and established them as early as the days of the Saxons ? Has not Sir Henry Maine said that the common law in England, growing out of the Saxon village, is the very type of Aryan Self-Government that you find in Indian villages up to the time of Sir Thomas Munro, of which many a trace remains down to the present time ?

The villagers governed themselves for thousands of years, which you find by the evidence of history, by literature, by tradition, by copper-plate memorial, by inscriptions engraven on pillars, and you find not what they say here, that they have never used a vote, but you find the very contrary. You find the village people voting in the way they vote today. I can take you back to 400 years before the Christian Era, when the practice of voting was found among the Indian people (Cheers). Have you realized that, when you read the history of India, you have people who have only studied India since the days of Lord Clive ? But if you will look at their story, if you will look at their methods of making their Councils, and making their popular assemblies, you

will find that the Indo-Aryan, as he is called, was for long far in advance of the Saxon younger Aryan in the west of the European lands. I ask you to remember that there are records still as to the methods of Council Government far more advanced than the kind you find proposed in these Reforms. Are you aware that in early India the King was not the ruler without a Council around him? Are you aware that that Council, sometimes called the Sabha, was the Executive of the Government; that, in addition to that, there was the Popular Assembly or the Samiti? The two are found throughout the history of India. You find still right up in Bihar many traces of the old Popular Assembly. You find Halls still, where the people meet in council to decide questions of public policy. It is not only in the village you find Self-Government, but it is in tribal republics, it is in aristocratic republics, it is in Monarchies, it is in the Empires, and in all of these an element of proper Government comes in. And so true is that, it is declared that if a King governs badly, he may be deposed from the throne and another placed in his stead. And everywhere, through the course of Indian History, you find the people governing themselves, looking with care and intelligence into the problems of administration and of policy. Not only is that true, but when you find Mr. Montagu or his amanuenses, probably Mr. Morris, writing the bureaucratic view of the Government, you find him saying that the villager has caste panchayats, but has never exercised a vote on public questions. I say that it is historically false; that there are masses of evidence now available, which show that he has exercised his mind on all these questions.



## ***Classes and Divisions***

It is said that there are so many classes and divisions. It is said that the bureaucrat must protect the masses of the people against the tyranny of the higher classes. But how far have they defended them? Can men of alien blood and alien custom and alien ways of thinking, by any possibility, understand the necessity of the masses as their own flesh and blood in the educated classes of the people? I know why they make the mistake, for they are foreigners. The man who dwells in the West End of London, the noble and the highly placed, does not understand the man that lives in the slum separated from him by differences of birth and by miserable poverty. But the Indian is not divided like that in horizontal classes as in England. He is divided, I grant it, by caste, but one class includes the Raja, the noble, the landowner, the banker, and the peasant-cultivator, and all these are found within the limits of a single caste. And as I heard Mr. Vijayaraghava Chari say the other day that, if there be a marriage or a festival, all the relatives are called together, and no one says, "You are a poor man, you are a rich man, you are a Raja, or you are a peasant-cultivator." They sit and eat together; they meet as brothers; and there is no distinction here between classes in that way, save that of education. That is the difference: that some from the village have been educated men, while others have remained uneducated. If one of you who is a lawyer or a barrister coming back from England has a father and mother in the village, do you lose your brothers or sisters or cousins who are in the village? Do you lose your power of knowing their will and of representing them,

because you have got a certain amount of foreign education? You are not alien to your own people ; you are their own ; and they belong to you and you to them. Hence I say that, as in other countries, at the first dawn of Self-Government India is fit to rule herself. She knows her own troubles, her own difficulties, her own wants ; and in the National Congress, since it first met, one of its preoccupations was to press for education, to press for industrial occupations, to press for the opening up of technical schools, for the lightening of income-tax on the poorer, and the getting rid of the salt-tax ; and all the things that were wanted for the helping of the people have gone out from the Congress Pandals and not from the offices of the bureaucrats.

### *Changes in Provinces and Central Government*

We ask in the second part of the resolution that changes in the Provinces and the Central Government may go on side by side. There is no good in moving for liberty in the Provinces, if you keep autocracy at Delhi and Simla. It is idle to say that you give liberty to those who live in the Provinces, when you make the autocrat, who has power over all legislation, more strongly entrenched than ever in his power in the Central Government ; and so it is that we ask that the change may be simultaneous. You can make one longer than the other. If you like, you may take five years for the Provinces and 15 or 20 years for the Central Government. You may make more steps in the Central than in the Provincial Governments. But there must be change in both. Without that, it is like having a cart with one little wheel and

a big wheel, with the result that the whole machine will turn from side to side, autocracy on one and partial liberty on the other, gradual autonomy on one and absolutism on the other. You can never drive the State Coach with wheels of such unequal size. So, we say, bring the whole Government on together, make your liberty or partial liberty as it is in Provinces, and also introduce the same liberty in the Central Government. Give that as your proposals, and we will gladly accept them. Give us the opportunity, if you will, of making mistakes, for by making mistakes men grow wise. Unless you give them responsibility, unless you give them power, they will always remain children and not men. They will always remain in tutelage, and not capable of managing their own affairs.

### *Nations by Themselves are Made*

So, when people come to you and say that you ask too much, when people declare that you are unfit and have no right to govern yourself, say to them : We are men not children. We are a great Nation and not a barbarous people ; our culture goes back far, far into the past. Long before you dreamt of culture in the West, India was a highly civilized trading and prosperous Nation. Appeal to your past to justify your hope of the future ; point to your past to show that you are fit.

And this I say, in conclusion, that there is no other Nation, neither England, nor America, nor any one of the Allies, nor Germany, nor Austria, who have a right to say to another Nation : You shall not be free ; you are not worthy to be free ; and you must remain a subject people. That

question is not to be decided on the battlefields of France, but it has to be decided in India, in your Congress, in your Conferences, and wherever you gather together. No nation is made free by another Nation. It wins its own freedom, and by the winning shows its fitness to be free.

—1 September 1918, *New India*

## **“ TOO BUSY TO DEAL WITH INDIA ”**

Mr. Lloyd George, it is said, has appealed for the suspending of all political agitation until after the War. Mr. Lloyd George could not have done that ; because in the middle of the War he made an Irish Convention to discuss Home Rule for Ireland. They were not so concentrated on the War, so busy, so active with the War but that, the Irish Convention should sit month after month at Dublin to make the scheme. Mr. Lloyd George promised that he will use the whole of his power in the Government to pass that scheme through Parliament, as soon as it comes into his hands. If he can do so for Ireland, he dare not say to us, “ Stop all agitation in India.” His Government have passed the biggest Reform Bill that has been ever passed in England. They have given manhood suffrage. Is it not controversial ? It has been a matter of controversy ever since 1894, bitter controversy and angry controversy, and it has now been passed in the middle of the War. The Woman Suffrage Bill has also been passed. Six million women have been added to the register of the voters, nearly doubling the electorate. A leap in the dark ; no one knows how the women are going to vote. Why has he done that ? What happened in England was this : They have not avoided controversial

questions ; but they have managed them by compromise, before the questions came before the House. They have got the two parties together, they have talked the question over, and they have agreed upon an arrangement. The Reform Bill was made by the Speaker's Committee ; and bristling with controversial questions as it was it was passed through the "two" houses, and not in one point was there any divergence of opinion. ' Why cannot they do the same thing here ? If England, where London is being bombed day after day, England, where there is danger of invasion by Germany, there is shortage of some of the most necessities of life, if a country under such a strain is sending out its men to the battlefield by millions and not knowing how the battle will go, if that country had time enough and thought enough to give to great questions of reform, why may not we, seven thousand miles away, have a little time to give to the liberty of our own country ? (Cheers)

—16 April 1918, *New India*

## OUR INTERWOVEN DESTINIES

### *India and Britain*

We, who . . . have learned to look on the scroll of history as the unrolling of a definite Plan, in which each Race and Sub-Race and Nation plays its own part, cannot but watch the present happenings with intensest interest, as each new event comes into sight, and is seen as a fragment of the great mosaic. In that Plan, as often said, the bringing together of India and Great Britain was for the helping of the world ; partly in order that India's priceless treasures of

spiritual knowledge might be circulated over all the world in the language that is the most widely spread at the present time, and thus reach and influence the virile but unspiritual younger Nations, springing from the sturdy British stock. Partly also that the Indians, who had so deeply sinned by their divisions, might be driven together by a foreign rule and prepared to make a united Nation. Partly that the literature of Freedom, found nowhere in such splendid form and instinct with such fiery passion as in the tongue of Milton, Burke and Shelley, might re-awaken in India her sleeping traditions of intellectual freedom, out of which all other forms of freedom grow, and might drive that mighty force into modern channels, to irrigate the vast extent of Indian life. Through the union of India and Great Britain, at first as ruler and ruled, and then as willing, equal partners in a world-wide Empire, humanity was to be prepared for the Coming of the World-Teacher, and the foundations of a new civilization were to be laid.

—April 1917, *The Theosophist*

For the sake of India, Britain and the Empire, it is necessary that India and Britain should be closely bound together as equal comrades. How many homes in England would today not have been left desolate, if India had been a Self-Governing Dominion, ready to send out her millions to weight the scale of victory for the Allies. How many precious lives would have been saved, how many children would not have been orphaned, if Britain had stood for Liberty within her own Empire, and had not been a house divided against itself.

—April 1918, *The Theosophist*

I have often pointed out in the past, and have just repeated, that Great Britain was peculiarly fitted for her task by her own past history and present Constitution. I may reproduce here that which I wrote in *New India* on March 19th :

Great Britain—which does not include Ireland—is by far the freest country in the world, not only freer than the Central Powers, but freer than the Republic of France and even than the Republic of the United States of America. She has a free Press, and personal liberty is less shackled than in any other land ; there is less interference with personal liberty there than anywhere else in the world, and property is safe from executive seizure outside the law. It is because of this that the British throne is safer than any other, and it is because of this that Great Britain was chosen out of the competing European Powers, to bring India into the circle of free World-Powers. East and West, Asia and Europe, can only be brought together in peaceful and harmonious union through Great Britain and India, standing side by side as Free Nations, in close and intimate cooperation. If the primacy of Asia falls either to Japan or China—both Fourth Race Nations—evolution will suffer a serious set-back.

Great Britain and India together are the natural leaders of Asia, for the civilizations of eastern Asia have been largely dominated by Indian thought. The Lord Buddha is followed by millions in Japan, China, Tibet and Siam. Japan has long looked to India as to the Mother of her people. The hoary

antiquity of China, ante-dating the birth of the Aryan Race, has been deeply leavened by her thought and culture. The peoples of Persia, Mesopotamia, the Caucasus, Arabia, are all branches of the wide-spreading banyan tree, rooted in India, and those branches have spread over Europe itself, the Kelt and the Teuton finding in the Aryan root-stock the ancient unity now separated into such wide divergencies. What more fitting than that India and Great Britain, the eldest and the youngest, grey Mother and lusty Daughter, should meet again in the Family Home, and claim their joint Heritage? May it not be that, in this terrible War, there may be developed by the wondrous alchemy of God a binding material to unite the East and West?

—April 1917, *The Theosophist*

### ***Europe and India***

*Even in a question seemingly remote from India—the building of a United States of Europe, Dr. Besant saw India's release as a vital factor. In a lecture given 2 October 1927 on a Federation of European States, she said :*

Soon I am going back to India, to strive there to increase the movement for India's freedom. That has a great part in this future, because as long as India is outside, a subject Nation, a War of colour may break out at any moment—the most disastrous War to which any civilization can be exposed. Before we can look for the United States of Europe we must make friends with our coloured brothers everywhere ; and India is the one place where that is at once possible, because she is within the Realm of what should be the



great British Commonwealth of Free Nations instead of an Empire ruling over a subject people. . . .

—*The Future of Europe*

## WHEN WILL THE WAR END AND HOW?

Asked in December 1917 by *The Christian Commonwealth* "When will the War end and how?" Dr. Besant says:

I have no idea when the War will end, but I do not think it will end until Britain lives up to her past traditions and her present professions. How it will end depends once more on her treatment of India; if she sets India free, India will arm herself and fight for Britain; then the man-power needed will be supplied, and there will be a glorious peace, which will last indefinitely. Britain and India, hand-in-hand, will keep the peace of the world. If she opposes India's freedom and prevents Mr. Montagu's noble mission from ending in full success, then the peace will be inconclusive and precarious; and War will, ere very long, return.

—2 May 1918, *New India*

The end is sure; for the world has climbed too far on its upward way to be again cast down into barbarism. Victory will crown the arms of those who are fighting for Freedom, and are at death-grips with Autocracy. But victory is delayed, because Britain is a house divided against itself, battling for freedom in Europe, maintaining autocracy in India. . . . In the Hebrew story, the Israelites were defeated by the enemy because one of their number dishonestly took that to which he had no right, and not until the crime was expiated could victory be won. While the sin of Achan is found in the Allied camp, victory is delayed.

If Britain would cleanse her hands from enforcing her irresponsible rule over a great Nation panting for freedom, and would act in Asia consistently with her professions in Europe, the War-clouds would be scattered and the Sun of Peace would rise with healing in his wings. Then shall India and Britain together stand as guardians of the peace of the world.

—December 1917, *Theosophical Presidential Address*

### ***Germany's Fifth-Column Activity***

The world cannot feel assured of lasting peace with one-fifth of its population in a state of unrest, held down by repressive legislation. Is it conceivable that India, an Asian country, will look around Asia, and see Japan, China, Persia, Afghanistan, Siam, autonomous, self-determining, working out their own national destinies, growing in prosperity, masters of their resources, despising India as their inferior, because subject to an alien Autocracy, and that India, once the greatest of them all, will remain satisfied and content under the yoke? Surrounded by a jeering ring of free and self-determining Nations, will not the humiliation pierce her very heart? Will not the world-jury recognize the danger of a new conflict arising between Great Britain and Germany, of Germany, beaten in the West, turning eastwards to seek her *revanche* in the East, carrying on a subtle propaganda in India, hypocritically posing as a friend of liberty, reversing her present role of a defender of autocracy into that of a defender of liberty, and throwing Britain, the destroyer of autocracy in Europe, into the odious part of an upholder thereof in Asia?

Would not true statesmanship, instead of tinkering with petty reforms and leaving untouched the citadel of autocracy, the Government of India, recognize the gravity of the situation, accept the principles of the C.L. [Congress-League] Scheme as now reaffirmed and inserted into the M.C. [Montagu-Chelmsford] proposals, and thus turn India into a buttress of the British Commonwealth, the Premier Nation of Asia, the pledge of the world's enduring peace, a field made fertile for all good by mutual love, instead of sterile by distrust on one side and resentment on the other?

—11 September 1918, *New India*

### *For World Safety*

*To her British Labour Colleagues :*

... If we are free, Britain's Empire in the East is safe, and we can guard Australasia, too thinly peopled to protect her immense coast-line. When with you in 1914, I said the price of India's loyalty is India's freedom. Now I say the price of your Empire's safety is India's freedom. ... Help us to become a free Commonwealth under the British Crown, and we will bring our man-power to secure the World-Peace.

—3 December 1917, *New India*

Even five millions of Indians out of 315 millions trained as soldiers under military discipline could save the Empire and make further attacks on the Empire impossible.

—10 February 1917, *New India*

Without India, Britain would fall from her position as the greatest of World-Powers, while with India, and possibly re-linked with the United States in close alliance, she would lead the forward evolution of Humanity for centuries to come. . .

... But in future, unless India wins Self-Government, she will look enviously at her self-governing neighbours, and the contrast will intensify her unrest.

But even if she gains Home Rule, as I believe she will, her position in the Empire will imperatively demand that she shall be strong as well as free. She becomes not only a vulnerable point in the Empire, as the Asian Nations evolve their own ambitions and rivalries, but also a possession to be battled for. Mr. Laing once said: "India is the milch-cow of England," a Kāmadhenu, in fact, a "cow of plenty"; and if that view should arise in Asia, the ownership of the milch-cow would become a matter of dispute, as of old between Vashishtha and Vishvamitra. Hence India must be capable of self-defence both by land and sea. There may be a struggle for the primacy of Asia, for supremacy in the Pacific, for the mastery of Australasia, to say nothing of the inevitable trade-struggles, in which Japan is already endangering Indian industry and Indian trade, while India is unable to protect herself.

In order to face these larger issues with equanimity, the Empire requires a contented, strong, self-dependent and armed India, able to hold her own and to aid the Dominions, especially Australia, with her small population and immensely unoccupied and undefended area. India alone has the manpower which can effectively maintain the Empire in Asia, and it is a short-sighted, a criminally short-sighted, policy not to build up her strength as a Self-Governing State within the Commonwealth of Free Nations under the British Crown. The Englishmen in India talk loudly of their interests; what can this mere handful do to protect their interests against

attack in the coming years? Only in a free and powerful India will they be safe. Those who read Japanese papers know how strongly, even during the War, they parade unchecked their pro-German sympathies, and how likely after the War is an alliance between these two ambitious and warlike Nations. Japan will come out of the War with her army and navy unweakened, and her trade immensely strengthened. Every consideration of sane statesmanship should lead Great Britain to trust India more than Japan, so that the British Empire in Asia may rest on the sure foundation of Indian loyalty, the loyalty of a free and contented people, rather than be dependent on the continued friendship of a possible future rival. For international friendships are governed by national interests, and are built on quicksands, not on rock.

—1922, *The Future of Indian Politics*

### ***If Only !***

IF ONLY the Government of India, while crushing the conspiracy of crime, would publicly declare itself in favour of Dominion Status for India, not in stages but as a whole, then indeed it would rally to its side all patriotic Indians, and would write its name indelibly on the Roll of Fame, as the Government which put an end to unrest in India, and linked her with Britain by indissoluble bands of mutual Service, mutual Trust, and mutual Love. Otherwise we tread again the old weary round of unrest, conspiracy, repression, unsatisfactory reforms, unrest *und so weiter*, till India breaks away to the infinite loss of both countries.

—8 November 1924, *New India*

## FREE INDIANS ALONE CAN DEFEND INDIA

What is the right relation of the student to politics? He should study the principles of politics and economics in relation to the history and present conditions of his own country, but should not apply them in political action while he is *in statu pupillari*. That is what I have said and insisted on for 20 years, and still say. In normal times it is easy to maintain this rule. In abnormal times, such as the present, with the excitement of a World War, the peril of the Empire, the rapidly changing political position of his own country in that Empire, the maintenance of the rule becomes more difficult, and some amount of excitement is inevitable. Now that the Government has called on the elder student population to enrol themselves as members of the Indian Defence Force, to submit themselves to "strict military discipline" so as to be ready to undertake garrison duty if called on, the rule practically becomes inoperative for the recruits.

Young men cannot be expected to make the sacrifice asked for unless they are inspired by a passionate love for their Motherland, such as emptied the Universities of Great Britain. Love for a foreign Empire in which they are a Dependency cannot do it; love for an Empire in which they are a partner will do it. The prospect of the prolongation of a condition of inferiority will not inspire; the love of Liberty and the hope of winning it, and of becoming citizens of an Empire of free Nations will inspire. Let there be no mistake. When Britons want to flatter Indians they call them

“ fellow-citizens,” but both Britons and Indians know perfectly well that Indians are not citizens. Citizens of the Empire live in countries where they have a free press, where they are represented, where they tax themselves, where they cannot be imprisoned without trial, nor their property forfeited without a judicial proceeding. These are elementary rights of citizenship, and they do not exist in India. Therefore Indians are not citizens of the Empire, and if they defend it, it is in the hope of winning freedom and citizenship within it.

Students know all this, and if they—and their elders—are called to perform the citizen's duty of defence, their answer to the call implies that they look for the right of the citizen as the just correlative of the duty.'

—2 March 1917, *New India*

Our very Reasonable Demand is “ Give us Home Rule and then you can arm a free and contented India as the strongest bulwark of the Empire.” From the British point of view this is probably the strongest argument in favour of Home Rule. For Britain is in deadly need of man-power and has exhausted her own resources ; she has wrought a miracle in the number of men she has sent to the battle-fields ; but she can do little, if anything, further. She *must* fall back on India, or make an inconclusive peace and prepare for another War—a ghastly prospect. But she dare not arm India until India is free. . . . A Nation in bondage that is so unreasonable as not to agitate would be unworthy of freedom, would be a nation of cattle, not of human beings. Only liberty befits a Nation of men.

—16 February 1918, *New India*

"India alone has the man-power which can effectively maintain the Empire in Asia, and it is a short-sighted, a criminally short-sighted, policy not to build up her strength as a Self-Governing State within the Commonwealth of Free Nations under the British Crown," said Dr. Besant in 1917 . . . *New India*, her journal, quoting the above, adds the prophetic comment : "A few years hence, everyone will see that this is mere common-sense . . . though some solemnly tell us that 'India is defended outside India.' Is anyone really so fatuous as to suppose that if the Germans engineered a thrust through Persia on Baluchistan the victories of the Allies in France would foil that thrust? Might not such an attempt be made, as in the Panjab, to create a diversion here which would help their situation in Europe? . . ."

—3 April 1918, *New India*

Nothing will save India but the Indian valour, willingly coming to the rescue, if contented by the grant of Home Rule. The British Empire's fate hinges on the fate of India, and therefore it is but wisdom and prudence to keep India contented by granting Home Rule to her. At present she is treated with distrust, and the Arms Act is but one example of it. That shows that English rulers cannot trust Indians. A rule based on the people's love and confidence needs no Arms Act. India has shown her fervent loyalty; India has saved England when the gallant Indian forces barred the way to Paris. It is they who filled up the gaps in the English army. Let the English Nation know that India is a tremendous reservoir of man-power, far greater than America. The Americans take long to come. Indians are at hand at any time. And is it to the dignity of England to say that it



depends upon Americans and not on Indians? A Home-Ruled India will defend, if needs be, any country in the world with its tremendous man-power, and therefore a Home-Ruled India is necessary for the Empire. It is a matter of life and death for the Empire to arm Indians for defending it. Let this be said in plain words before the English public.

—15 March 1918, *New India*

## A PERSONAL NOTE

... One sits at the editorial table with the sword of Damocles hanging over one's head on the thin hair of some official. It is heavy and anxious work, but it is glorious to be allowed thus to serve the Ancient Motherland, to think of her, write for her, speak for her, live for her, and to dream of the happier days when Press Acts and the rest of the legislation of that ilk shall be of the past. . . . The chains of Press Acts here are inexpressibly galling; but it is for India's sake, and, for her, even slavery is welcome. Better is it to be a thrall here, at the mercy of any ill-tempered official, than to be free, in any other land.

—December 1914, *The Young Citizen*

But, after all, what matter these passing incidents in the long struggle of Liberty against Autocracy? Gallant men lost their mortal lives in that struggle in France, in Belgium, in Italy, in the Balkans, in Palestine, in Mesopotamia, in Africa. It is not much if others, in India, lose their reputations in the similar fight against Autocracy here. In both cases, the end is equally sure; and those who follow the flag of Liberty will triumph, for where Liberty is, there is Victory.

—30 September 1918, *New India*

# *IV. Obstacles on India's Pathway—*

*THE PROPHET WARNS*

I regard the Non-Cooperation movement as the greatest setback to India's freedom that has been started.

— March 1924, *The Theosophist*

# 1. RECURRENT GANDHIAN ANARCHY

[One of the great tragedies that have most effectually, even if but temporarily, blocked India's clear road to freedom is the philosophy and political leadership of Mr. M. K. Gandhi who is deified by many Indians under the title of "Mahatma" and has become literally India's Dictator. While greatly reverencing Gandhiji the saint, Dr. Besant regarded him as a most dangerous obstacle to India's progress.]

## ***1. GANDHIJI'S CRIMINAL UNWISDOM AND DISINTEGRATING INFLUENCE***

MR. GANDHI'S influence on politics since he came to India has always been destructive. I remember how, when I expressed to Mr. Gokhale, before Mr. Gandhi's arrival in India, my pleasure about his coming, and my hope that he would be a great help in winning Freedom for India, that wise and far-seeing statesman replied : " No, you are mistaken ; Gandhi will cause a great setback to our political movement." His words have proved to be sadly true. The wild-cat movements of Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience [now called " Mass Struggle "] devastated the political field, blighting the promising harvest that was showing its green shoots above

the soil. Of course, I opposed these insane propositions, but the wave of fanatical fetish-worship swept over India and carried all before it. Gokhale was happy in passing from this world before he saw the ruin of his life's work. . . .

. . . There is nothing new in the teaching of Mr. Gandhi on Non-Cooperation. It is based on the application by Count Tolstoy of the teaching of part of the "Sermon on the Mount" to the life of the individual and the Nation :

"I say unto you, that ye resist not evil ; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away."—S. Matt. V, 39-42.

Tolstoy thought that this teaching was binding on every Christian and on every Christian Nation. Hence the teaching of the "Martyr Nation." . . . Russia has been preeminently the "martyr Nation" not willingly, but helplessly, serving perhaps as a lesson to the world, that humanity is not yet fitted to follow, as Nations, the life of the Sanyasi, and that the lofty teaching of the Lord Buddha as to perfect love, and of the Lord Christ for those who were strong enough to obey the command : "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect," needs to be checked by His other command in the same sermon : "Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn against and rend you." The efforts of Tolstoy to teach the one without the other, to address to men full of

desires, full of greed and covetousness, the precept which only the self-controlled, the desireless, could practise without encouraging violence and lawlessness, have borne bitter fruit in the Red Terror, where the violent rose into power and trampled under foot the gentle and the weak. God grant that similar unbalanced teaching here, based on the theories of Tolstoy, may not plunge India into similar horrors. The exquisite balance in Hinduism of duties according to faculties, the dharma of each individual and each caste—when caste was real and ere the confusion of castes set in—was the foundation on which was built the marvellous structure of Indian civilization, stable throughout millennium after millennium. Until the Inner Ruler Immortal rules the lower manifestations of consciousness, and the whole nature is conformed to that of the God within, mankind needs the pressure of external law to check the violence of the lower nature, and at the peril of ruin does a State forget that "Order is Heaven's first law." If Russia's agony teaches this lesson to the foolish, her suffering will not have been in vain. . . .

Dr. Magee, Bishop of Peterborough, remarked on this application that if any Nation obeyed the Sermon on the Mount, it would not exist for a week. Mr. Gandhi does not follow his master in his advice to apply non-resistance to the Nation; he applies it to individual thefts and assaults but advises on the contrary to "destroy it," or "bring it to its knees," or "compel it to yield." The whole theory is obviously in flat contradiction of the teaching of the Manu as regards National organization. . . .

. . . Mr. Gandhi by introducing it here in India—where the old caste system had sensibly assigned Yoga to the

spiritual only and had appointed the Kshatriyas to rule, defend and keep order in the State, has done deadly mischief, at a critical time, to political reform, as well as endangered Society by revolution. Let us during this time of danger, drop all criticism of Government action, and stand firmly by the Government against revolution which means bloodshed at home and invasions from abroad.

But when has Mr. Gan̄hi entered the political arena without bringing about "Himalayan blunders"? He is not a politician; he is a vague, dreamy mystic, out of touch with ordinary human nature. He believes in practising the precepts of the "Sermon on the Mount" . . . [and] wants India to practise them by "non-violent civil disobedience," expecting a peasant to see his land and cattle seized for non-payment of taxes, and his family reduced to starvation without resistance. . . . —1919, 1923, 1924, 1929

. . . The Masters note each worker for the Motherland and send Their blessings to all who render Her faithful service. We must not become discouraged, even if the road winds ever up the hill, for the end is sure. It is very unfortunate that so much enthusiasm and self-sacrifice should be wasted over the salt question, when that and so many other grievances would quickly be swept away were India free. It is the lack of freedom, for want of which India is slowly bleeding to death, and she wastes time and strength over minor grievances when these should be consecrated to win the Dominion Status which Mr. Gandhi truly says is equivalent to Independence and is now within our reach, but is neglected in favour of the spectacular policy of boiling salt-water. Cannot Indians see that Mr. Gandhi is unconsciously

a weapon in the Government's hands to delay the struggle for India's Freedom? His success means India's failure and the resultant chaos. —24 April 1930, *New India*

Mr. Gandhi lives in a world of his own, quite different from the world of human beings, with their crude ideas, their easily aroused passions, and their sudden bursts of activity. He is dangerous, well-meaning man as he is, because his imaginary human beings whom he arranges so nicely are not the human beings who live in our world, and do not dance to his piping, as he expects them to do. His imaginary Government which is paralyzed by Non-Cooperation bears no resemblance to the actual Government, prepared to take a part in the game not laid down for it in the drama. Thus, when a Non-Cooperator lately said he would not cooperate with the Government, the Government serenely declined to cooperate with him and would not supply Government water to his land. There was a certain humour in the situation, but the first Non-Cooperator was naturally indignant when the Government acquiesced in his proposal. Unhappily, the outcome, when the proceedings really begin, will not be of this farcical nature.

It all means alienation, hatred increasing between the two Nations in whose union lies the hope of the world.

—August 1920, *The Theosophist*

It is well to see how Mr. Gandhi has changed: He used to speak against boycott, as involving hatred; he now preaches it. He used to preach truth; he now advocates the boycott of foreign goods and the keeping of a vow, and uses trains, motors, posts, telegraphs, all foreign. He used to abhor bloodshed; he now contemplates calmly



rivers of blood. It is useless to multiply his kaleidoscopic changes. The fact is he is taking advantage of Indian discontent to spread the gospel of his master Tolstoy, a philosophic western anarchist, who had the sense not to spread his teachings among the ignorant as does his disciple.

All this is the more reckless, because it has come in the way of solid political, industrial and educative work, while it stirs up fanaticism and violence. He seeks to prevent India from taking a great step towards ordered freedom, and has divided Indian politicians into warring camps, where before they were united in their efforts to win freedom.

—23 December 1920, *New India*

### **“ MUDDLE-HEADED DIPLOMACY ”**

Gandhiji has spoken out strongly in the past against exploitation of Labour, but is absolutely silent on the point today. He himself is “ thinking furiously night and day,” as he confessed to Rabindranath Tagore, but cannot yet evolve a formula which will meet the requirements of the situation. Commercial interests in Bombay are apprehensive that the inauguration of a campaign of Civil Disobedience will do serious damage to trade and industry. But Gandhiji will be false to his reputation if he listens to counsels of prudence and wisdom. Violence is in the air, he writes with perfect nonchalance, and may burst out through a channel that he may create for it in Civil Disobedience. Apparently, he has altered his outlook since the days of Chauri Chaura, when he confessed his Himalayan blunder and suspended the movement. If, on the present occasion, there should again be violence, the responsibility will not be his, he pleads in

advance. He would be performing only a useful service in bringing it to the surface. With his critics he argues: The Congress having passed the Independence resolution, is he to remain quiet? The Calcutta resolution, which he put into effect at Lahore, was drafted by himself when he was "muddle-headed," he said, in the early hours of a morning; it was "clumsily worded," and, further, was based on "diplomacy which stank in his nostrils." How did such a resolution become sacrosanct at Lahore? Was it not because of his inability to come to terms with the communal and Communist elements in the Congress that he chose the path which leads to destruction? —30 January 1930, *New India*.

### **"THEY WHO SHOULD HAVE BUILT..."**

Then followed the unhappy year, 1920, in which Mr. Gandhi launched the ruinous Non-Cooperation movement, the source of all our subsequent troubles, dissensions, and hatreds, and the ultimate ruin of the Congress as a representative of the Nation, [wrote Dr. Besant in *New India*, tracing the attempt to formulate a Constitution for India].

The first two and a half months were utilized by the National Home Rule League in explaining the Reform Act, the powers it gave and the defects from which it suffered. But the formation of the Khilafat Committee, and the later identification of its propaganda with that of the Congress; the special Congress of September, adopting the Non-Cooperation programme, the Boycott of Courts, Councils, and Colleges, etc., drawing the youth of the country, by their enthusiasm and patriotism, into roads of theatrical demonstrations accompanied too often with violence; the enrolling

of them as volunteers in a conspiracy to break laws in futile and foolish ways; the making of promises impossible of fulfilment and thereby bringing about their present apathy and cynicism and the blunting of their noblest feelings and aspirations; all these things gave a melancholy setback to the march of India towards Freedom and made the full success of the Reform Act impossible. The wreckers, by their violent language, captured the mob, who inevitably translated the violent language into violent acts. . . . Home Rule propaganda was sorely weakened, as its steady quiet work was despised amid the constant excitements of the hate campaign, and the melodramatic appeals to the passions of the crowd, with the promises of Swarāj in a year.

In 1920, a little circle formed the 1921 Club in Madras, its name indicating their hope of the new era to be opened by the working of the Reforms, with elected majorities in every House. The Councils, however, were boycotted by Mr. Gandhi's command, and men whose talents would have been invaluable in them were condemned to a futile agitation which had no relation to Swarāj, but conduced only to revolution. They, who should have built, consecrated their powers to destruction.

The success of the Councils, the useful Acts passed by them . . . convinced the N.-C.O.'s of the value of the Reformed Legislatures, and they renounced their boycott and entered them, thus giving the most eloquent testimony in their power to the folly of their own previous decision and the political good sense of those who entered them, whom they had branded as traitors to their country, betrayers, and renegades.

—11 January 1929, *New India*

## 2. THE GANDHI RAJ

Mr. Gandhi . . . is a Dictator and is bound by no laws but his own will. . . . His followers . . . prefer living under his autocracy and the tyranny of his lieutenants to the wide liberty they can now enjoy under the Indo-British Government. It is the nemesis of the British autocracy, "now abandoned" both in theory and in fact, that its subjects, inured to the arbitrary exercise of irresponsible authority, no longer finding it complete enough in British India, seek its shelter in Mr. Gandhi's autocracy, unrestricted by any laws. . . . It enables them to continue to live without responsibility. . . .

—13 February 1922, *New India*

### "SLAVE MENTALITY"

Under the growth of what has been called "slave mentality," a new and sinister change has taken place. Mr. Gandhi has been acknowledged by a number of people as a dictator, whose opinion is to be accepted as supreme. He is hailed as "Commander," as "General," and we are all bidden to obey him, on pain of being denounced as unpatriotic, as enemies of the Motherland. Despite the fact that some of his ideas have proved to be impracticable and others to be mischievous, the mass slave mentality marches triumphantly along, denouncing and persecuting all who resist its sway.

But a new and more absurd position has now arisen. Mr. Gandhi is announced to be immersed in silent meditation, in order to determine what laws shall be obeyed, and

what laws shall be disregarded. We are not to follow our own consciences but his, and *his* "Inner Voice" is to be accepted as *our* law. The "Inner Ruler Immortal" in each of us is to be dethroned to make way for Mr. Gandhi's. Otherwise, we shall be ordered to hold our tongues, or to submit to be howled down. Personally, I have no objection, as I have experienced that intelligent form of opposition before—it is rather a favourite with Bombay youth. They used it against myself when I opposed Non-Cooperation, before everyone, including its author, had found out that it was a "Himalayan blunder." However, young enthusiasm, though changeable for lack of experience, is, in itself, a beautiful thing. The young will, all too soon, become crystallized.

But Mr. Gandhi is not young, and he ought really to find work more suitable to his age than the breaking of laws which he has long obeyed. Why not choose some harmful law, especially as crude salt is said to contain poison, and he may become responsible for much sickness if people use it?

Suppose that he succeeds in spreading the idea that laws, merely as laws, should be broken, what can be the only result? The triumph of strength over Justice, of disorder over Order, until the masses of the people—who are always the greatest sufferers from disorder—clamour for a powerful dictator who will give them protection and peace.

We are endeavouring to win Swarāj. But how is the first Swarāj Government to continue to exist, if Mr. Gandhi's policy of promoting anarchy by the casual breaking of laws is to be followed?

—17 April 1930, *New India*

**Swaraj**

This question concerns the whole Indian Nation, and cannot be decided by representatives of the Rump Congress, now supposed to be elected on a farcical basis of a 4-anna franchise without any proof of accurate registration, and excluding the huge majority of the educated classes, and the properly elected representatives of the Nation. We have had some experience of the Gandhi-cum-Congress Raj, under which we find that life, person, and property are not secure ; under which the dead are not safe in their graves ; under which lawful business is stopped, and streets cannot be traversed without danger of insult ; under which women's decency is outraged, their clothing torn off them and men's clothes also are dragged from their bodies and burnt ; under which there is no liberty of public speech ; under which irresponsible bureaucrats, restricted by laws and customs are exchanged for irresponsible youths, without either manners or outer control. We do not enjoy the change, and we like still less the future, unless this autocracy be broken and India set free to advance along constitutional lines.

—13 February 1922, *New India*

**“ THE QUEEREST REVOLUTION ”**

Under the Gandhi Raj there is no Free Speech, no Open Meeting, unless for Non-Cooperators. Social and Religious boycott, threats of personal violence, spitting, insults in the streets, are the methods of suppression. Mob support is obtained by wild promises, such as the immediate coming of Swarâj, when there will be no rents, no taxes, by giving to Mr. Gandhi high religious names, such as “ Mahatma ” and

“Avatara,” assigning to him supernatural powers, and the like. Abraham Lincoln is alleged to have said that you could fool all the people for some of the time. Mr. Gandhi has certainly succeeded in fooling a part of them. He asks for two million spinning-wheels for 2 million families, and later he wants 48 millions. The spinning-wheel is the Saviour of India. In consequence of unkind suggestions that men could not be clothed by thread alone, he added handlooms, and just now hand-woven cloth is the salvation of India. Foreign cloth is boycotted or burnt. If there is not cloth enough to go round—and there is not—what there is must be cut up, and each man must have only a loin-cloth; Mr. Gandhi promptly sheds his clothes, and goes about in a loin-cloth only. Husbands and wives must live apart, to prevent slave children being born into the world. Hospitals are “institutions for propagating sin.” Doctors try to cure diseases caused by evil-living and so encourage it. Railways, machinery, are all bad. Man is restricted by nature to move as far as his hands and feet will take him, and he rushes about on railways. And so on *ad infinitum*. This is Mr. Gandhi’s Gospel, as witness his book, *Indian Home Rule*. And all this mid-summer madness has caught the fancy of boys and illiterates, and they shout down the rationals. When at last, Mr. Gandhi took the serious step of calling out millions of volunteers, and bade people pay no taxes, the Government arrested him, tried him in the politest way, and sent him to gaol. He now advises people to take up a programme of social work, which raises no enthusiasm after all the excitement, says that all his followers who have gone to prison (for violence of talk or of act) “must be sacrificed,” so that presumably

they will serve out their sentences, and he is devoting himself to learning Urdu. He says that he finds that he cannot control the forces he has raised, and is, presumably, rather glad to be relieved from the necessity of trying to do so.

Most of the large number of Non-Cooperators who are in gaol are there for refusing to give security to abstain from violent language or meetings in forbidden areas. They take up the position that they do not recognize the courts and will not plead. Some of the leaders are there for sedition. Curiously, except for a few newspapers, who rave against the Government, no one seems to be particularly troubled about any of them. The Revolution for the moment is stationary, but Revolutions cannot stand still and live. So far as Mr. Gandhi's real followers are concerned—they are a small, well-organized minority, they are honestly non-violent and perfectly harmless, except for their very inflammatory speech, exciting others. They are told no longer to break laws, no longer to "court going to gaol," to produce, sell and buy Khaddar (handwoven cloth). They do so. The Government is justified by this statement implying that they did break laws, and courted imprisonment, and leaves them there. The crowd looks on, and finding no amusement, does nothing, there being no one to lead it into mischief.

It is the queerest Revolution that ever was since Gandhi replaced Tilak, has had the queerest leader, and has now the queerest collapse.

—1922, *The Future of Indian Politics*

## **SWADESHI OR BOYCOTT?**

One result of the later programmes has been the very regrettable one of mob-violence. Picketing of liquor shops



has been carried out by force, and the general tendency of Mr. Gandhi's undisciplined followers is towards mob-tyranny in enforcing the orders of their dictator, now advanced by many to the rank of an Avatara ! All self-respecting men and women should revolt against an autocracy more searching and more rigorous than that abandoned by the Government. Government autocracy did not interfere with our clothes outside office hours nor insist that women, in the heat of summer, should cook in heavy clothes or else perform their household duties naked. Mr. Gandhi's insistence on the boycott of "foreign cloth"—not only British—was forced through by his expressed determination to sever all connection with the whole movement if his behests are not observed. It is not wonderful that the few leaders who capitulated at the Calcutta Congress are one by one deserting the new autocrat. Maharashtra, which deserted Mr. Tilak's "responsive cooperation," to follow Mr. Gandhi's Non-Cooperation, has entirely lost its place as the leader of Nationalism, and we have little active work there.

Another cause of disintegration is the attempted boycott of British goods, with the destruction of clothing, so terribly needed by the people . . . the want of which has led some Indians to commit suicide from shame of their nakedness—this is a counsel which cannot be too strongly condemned. . . . Only the really poor suffer by the bonfires, but their misery is seriously increased. They must take as consolation the answer stated by Mr. Gandhi himself to have been made by him to his wife, when she said she could not wear heavy khaddar when cooking, that she might then go naked into his kitchen, or leave, as he would not eat food cooked by

her if she wore other cloth. Thus does the Charka work as the protector of the modesty of Indian women. In Mr. Gandhi's address to the weavers of Madanpura appealing to them to give up the weaving of foreign yarn, he apparently forgot that the weavers would be dismissed if they did not weave the yarn supplied to them, and in urging them not to "think that they would be getting low wages by hand-spun yarn, he assured them that they would earn as much as they were earning now," he ignored the fact that the loosely twisted handspun yarn breaks much oftener in a power-driven machine than that which is better twisted and that each break means a loss of time for rejoining the broken threads and the consequent diminution of the amount of cloth produced. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee exhorted the Calcutta Marwaris to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their country, as did their ancestors, but the appeal seems to have fallen on deaf ears and they apparently are more concerned with the revival of trade, hoped for as a result of a good monsoon. . . .

—Speech delivered 29 August 1921, *New India*

I have preached and practised Swadeshi since 1894 ; my furniture, my clothes, are all Swadeshi. And this I have done for the reason given by Mr. Gandhi, " the religious and natural duty of every man for the encouragement of home industries, many of which are nearly ruined for want of encouragement." Mr. Gandhi objects to boycott, and though the result is the same, I admit the difference of motive: Swadeshi springs from love of the Motherland, boycott from hatred of Great Britain. . . .

—15 April 1919, *New India*

### 3. SATYAGRAHA “SELF-INVITED SUFFERING”

#### **SATYAGRAHA VS. PASSIVE RESISTANCE**

The application of the law [Satyagraha], however, as now used against what is called the Rowlatt Act, has caused a curious change of method. The satyagrahi does not directly inflict pain upon himself, but places himself in a position in which the Government inflicts pain on him for breach of a law. Now the Rowlatt Bill was so emasculated by the persistent mangling process carried on by the elected Indian members of the Supreme Legislative Council, that it has been reduced to an Act against revolutionary crimes, instead of, as at first, placing the liberty of every man and woman in India at the mercy of the Executive. Under these circumstances the old-fashioned Passive Resister simply says: “There is nothing to break, and Passive Resistance is therefore impossible.” But the Satyagrahi is to break other laws, selected for such breach by a Committee, in order that he may be punished by the authorities, and that this self-invited suffering may set free spiritual force. Will it do so? To my mind it is very doubtful whether it will, however good the motive. For the spiritual world is an orderly world, and the breaking of laws in our physical world—not because the conscience feels the law to be broken to be so bad that obedience to it is disobedience to conscience, but because another person selects them for disobedience—seems to me to be at once illogical and unspiritual, so that the result of

the action is very doubtful. I am told that "logic is not everything," but that undoubtedly true statement does not exalt illogicality to the rank of a virtue, nor even make it desirable.

Society depends on obedience to law ; the worst evil of bad laws is that they diminish respect for law, and the worst evil of the Rowlatt Act is that it substitutes executive force for Law. Hence it seems to me that while the motive of the true Satyagrahi is spiritual, his action is mistaken ; his character will improve through his high motive, but his method, of subjecting his civic conscience to the dictation of another, is mischievous, and gravely increases the danger of general lawlessness, already threatening Society in every country, for his example may be appealed to, however unfairly, by the apostles of violence, as justifying their breaches of the law. It is this danger which makes some people condemn resort even to Passive Resistance, with its limited and carefully considered breaking of a special law repugnant to conscience, and a quiet submission to the penalty of the breach. It is this danger which made me call its use "the last weapon of a despairing people." Such is the religio-politico-problem set by Mr. Gandhi to India.

—April 1919, *The Theosophist*

The great experiment I mentioned last month, of the Satyagraha movement, has failed, for, as its leader said : "I miscalculated the forces of evil in India." The absence of any clause in the Rowlatt Act that could be broken forced the movement from passive endurance of suffering into active breaking of laws selected for the purpose, with the

object of forcing the Government to retaliate by imprisonment. The Government took no notice, as the breaches of law were unimportant. But the sad and inevitable result of the example set of deliberate law-breaking by the educated, was that predicted by me last month. [See Page 103.]

The forecast, most unhappily, proved true, for outside the danger of ordinary mob unruliness and violence, the "apostles of violence" asserted their sinister presence, and ere long the Government publicly stated that it was face to face with "open rebellion."

—May 1919, *The Theosophist*

## "THE MAHATMA'S" FASTS

*Later in 1922, of this same debacle of a nation's morale, Dr. Besant writes :*

Among the repealed laws is the Rowlatt Act—the "Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919"—to give it its proper name. It will be remembered that the whole country protested against this, and, as a Bill, the elected members rejected it, fighting it at every stage; it was against this that Mr. Gandhi proclaimed Civil Disobedience (not in obedience to conscience but to the orders of a Committee) and ordered the hartals that were observed all over the country. All this did nothing towards the repeal of the Rowlatt Act, but it demoralized the people. The hartal in Delhi caused a fierce outbreak of mob violence, and the first bloodshed in repressing it; hartals in many places led to the forcible closing of shops and the dragging of people from cars, carriages, and trams, and, in the Panjab, seething with suppressed fury over Sir Michael O'Dwyer's tyranny,

led to the Panjab tragedy, and in Bombay to the tragedy of Ahmedabad ; Mr. Gandhi then confessed his Himalayan blunder, and helped the Government to stop the rioting in his own town.

The worst of Mr. Gandhi's confessions, fasts, and penances is that soon after they are over he repeats the offence he bewailed. They are certainly very dramatic ; he informs the world that he is going to fast, and says what terrible anguish he is suffering ; the N.-C.O. press prints huge headlines, " Mahatma's Penance " and the like. To the reverent mind such a policy is repulsive and theatrical. It is like the non-violence which throws brickbats. With the public mind debauched by two years of exciting promises, always broken, but the breach covered by a new and more attractive one, even more impossible, time after time, the thoughtless part of the populace has been whirled from one excitement to another, and like a child sickened by too many sweetmeats, rejects wholesome food. The Indian Legislature strikes off India's limbs the fetters which have bound her from 1804 till now, but the press proclaims " Mahatma's Fast " and the new Freedom is ignored, while his followers gaze open-mouthed at him.

What good does his fast do to anyone ? We suspect that he fasts because he has the superstitious belief that by a few days of physical suffering he can atone for his sin, and get rid of the sense of responsibility. He actually says that God has given him His " third warning." Did he then refuse the first and the second ? Evidently, or the third would not have been needed. He will probably treat the third with similar indifference, cause another tragedy, then fast, and so

on, *da capo*, as long as people believe in him. If he were really penitent, he would abandon Civil Disobedience, not suspend it.

—16 February 1922, *New India*

What is Mr. Gandhi doing? He has spoken of starving himself to death. How will that help India? His duty is to undo what he has done, not to madden the people more by a self-inflicted death. That is a poor way out, and involves no sacrifice, compared with the sacrifice of acknowledging his mistake, freeing his little band of Satyagrahis from their immoral vow, and doing his utmost to help the Government out of the danger into which he has plunged them.

—21 April 1919, *New India*

## WHAT IS TRUE TAPAS?

*Commenting on the selling of proscribed literature in Bombay during the rapid development of Satyagraha, Dr. Besant said :*

The sellers are persons who are deservedly very popular in Bombay among the masses, and however meekly they may go to prison, the Bombay crowds are likely to be very much "otherwise." This is the danger against which some of us ventured to warn Mr. Gandhi, and now that tapas, with its immense appeal to Indians, has been mixed up with the breaking of laws, an explosive compound has been formed, of which none can see the result. Tapas—the use of fasting, and prayer in temples, masjids and churches—had been suggested to Mr. Gandhi by Mrs. Besant through Mr. Jamnadas, but it was as an *alternative*, not as an *accompaniment*,

to the breaking of laws. Tapas implies self-control, self-recollectedness, and a mood wholly divorced from violence ; breaking of laws implies a mood the very reverse of these, and the open defiance of all laws which have not a moral sanction, on the ground that the Government has forfeited its claim to obedience by its invasion of liberty—the ground laid down by Mr. Gandhi at Trichinopoly—means an attempt to force the Government to yield, not to soul-force, but to the fear of riot. Soul-force is not evoked by the selling of proscribed literature and the breaking of other laws, and when men are told that it is their right and *duty* to disobey all laws that have not a moral sanction, and that therefore it does not matter which laws the committee—which they have blindly promised to obey—selects for breach, the very foundation of the bonds which hold Society together is struck at. It is because of this that I have written and spoken against this movement, and I deeply regret that other leaders who think as I do on this matter, have left me to speak alone and to face alone the inevitable obloquy. Some indeed have condemned all passive resistance—a position impossible to others. But Satyagraha is not passive resistance, as Mr. Gandhi has honestly said. It seems that their reverence for Mr. Gandhi personally makes them shrink from condemning openly a movement he is leading. To me it seems that reverence for a personality should yield to the supreme civic duty to the Motherland of opposing a general defiance of law, destructive of Society.

The *only* way . . . to establish enduring peace, and to preserve the British connection is to secure the passing of the Reform Bill. Therefore I have advocated a temporary



Coalition between all parties who wish to secure racial good-will . . . by enduring peace, and by the connection between India and Great Britain. All else should be dropped to ensure the passage of the Reform Bill, and a steady agitation in its favour should here be kept up, while deputations are sent to Britain to support it. Athwart this vital work comes the Satyagraha movement, turning popular attention away from the Reforms, drawing away popular leaders from their duty, making them break their promise to go on deputation and to carry on political work, creating a spirit of general lawlessness, defying the Government in order to force them into imprisoning men and women honoured and loved by Indians, imprisonment likely to be followed by riots and bloodshed. It is Mr. Gandhi himself who says that they want to force the Government into arresting them.

As I write, news arrives that he has succeeded as regards himself, by refusing to obey orders not to go to Delhi or the Panjab, but to remain in Bombay. He has sent a message, in which, among other things, he says that he does not think we shall "gain salvation" by reforms. If he means "freedom" by the word "salvation," it is only to be had by Reforms or by Revolution. Lying down will not help us; that may take us to Moksha, but it will not win liberty for India, clothe the naked, feed the starving, give the labourer fair wage and decent housing, educate our masses, uplift the submerged. If people keep their vow and go to gaol, till all the leaders are imprisoned, if the followers keep their vow and look on quietly, the Government will also look on quietly, for the back of all political action is broken. Active political action brought us to where

we stand, with a Reform Bill in sight. Its cessation means the defeat of all our hopes, and the triumph of British interests over Indian, of autocracy over Responsible Government, of subjection over Liberty.

—15 April 1919, *New India*

## 4. THROUGH NON-COOPERATION TO BARBARISM

### **NON-COOPERATION IS REVOLUTION**

Mr. Gandhi forces us back to fundamentals, and in that he does the Indian Nation a great service. There are words that catch the fancy, that sound innocuous, or as implying but a little risk ; that suggest a plan so effective, so easy to carry out, if only every one will play his part in the drama, and the *denouement* is so splendid. A whole Nation united as one ; Hindu and Muslim standing shoulder to shoulder as brothers ; 315 millions of people of one heart and one mind. What Government can resist their demand ? What Government would be mad enough to try ? And how little it is that is asked of the Nation ; just to sit still with folded arms. To do nothing. Merely not to cooperate with the Government. Could any struggle be more simple, yet more effective ? No anger, no violence. The triumph of moral, of spiritual force, in defence of a righteous cause. Mr. Gandhi leads the movement ; all is well.

Some of us, however, looking into the simple procedure suggested, see in it possibilities of danger, probability of

violence, either a failure because only a few obey the call, or a triumph ending in anarchy. Mr. Gandhi admits the risk, but says that not to offer a channel by which the deep resentment may flow away is more dangerous than to open the channel to the current. If the Government does not yield, the responsibility is on the Government. That the Indian Government is as helpless as he is to change the decisions of the Supreme Council of the Allies does not seem to affect him. He is always convinced that his view is the right view, and that those who do not agree with him are suffering from a defect in their moral vision; if harm comes of his view and his method of enforcing it, the responsibility is not his.

Argument being futile, one betakes oneself to the careful consideration of his project. One comes to the conclusion that step No. 1<sup>1</sup> does not matter, and is even useful as a test of sincerity. Such tremendous promises of devotion to

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<sup>1</sup> Looking over the country we see signs of good omen for those who work for ordered Freedom. The Cooperation Movement is growing stronger and more united, while that of Non-Cooperation is disintegrating. This is partly due to the declaration by Mr. Gandhi that the country is not fit for the three dangerous parts of his original fourfold programme which was to give Swarâj in a year—the paralyzing of Government by the resignation of all paid civil officials, of the police and the soldiers, and the non-payment of taxes. If Mr. Gandhi had been strong enough to lead the people to carry out these, he would have made a revolution. Fortunately, they imply sacrifices which the people were not prepared to make, as was shown by the failure of the first step, the giving up of honorary posts under Government and of titles, to be made from August 1, 1920.—A.B.

death have been pledged ; such tremendous assertions that 315 millions of people are behind the demand have been made ; that one willingly awaits the beginning of the proof by comparatively easy performances. Step No. 2 means, if successful, the paralyzing of the Government administration, a collapse of the civil Government, in fact. If it succeeds, Government ceases to exist. One need hardly go further. We should never reach step No. 3. There would be no posts, no telegraphs, little transport, no courts, the whole machinery would be stopped. How this would affect the Supreme Council or the Khalifa, no one explains. How it would affect India, who is in no wise to blame, is obvious.

A result so tremendous gives us furiously to think. If Non-Cooperation with Government means this, to begin with, what is the real fact as to Cooperation ? We begin to realize that Cooperation between the people and the Government is the very basis of Society, and that without it, Society ceases to exist, and is reduced to a mob of individuals ; law disappears, order vanishes, the strongest rules, anarchy prevails. Out of barbarism man has risen by Cooperation ; into barbarism he returns if he adopts Non-Cooperation. We realize that this innocent seeming phrase, " Non-Cooperation with Government," is really a declaration of war against Society ; it is no moral nor spiritual force, but an appeal to physical force which strikes at the very basis of Society and of civilized life. We see that where one man pits his conscience against the law of his day, he appeals really to a moral and spiritual force ; he suffers but he does not rend in twain the

social bonds ; these continue though he may die ; his sufferings appeal ; they touch the heart ; they arouse the mind ; if he be inspired by God and is striking a really higher note, he, or his successors, conquer and Society is lifted higher. But if thousands of men follow this same course, they conquer by numbers not by suffering ; they terrify Government into submission by the physical force of their numbers, not by a moral or spiritual appeal. The one is a martyr ; the thousands are revolutionaries ; the passive resistance of the one becomes the shattering force of the thousands who make Government impossible by refusing the Cooperation on which Society is based.

—May-August, 1920 *New India*

Revolt is the last effort of despair against intolerable wrong. If a Nation is strong physically, and able to fight, the revolt takes the form of armed Revolution. If it is physically weak and unarmed, it might take the form of unarmed Revolution, *i.e.*, of Non-Cooperation. The latter has never been effectively tried, but would obviously, if successful, reduce the Nation—or such part of the Nation as survived hunger and nakedness—to anarchy and savagery. Armed Revolution would be preferable, as involving less suffering, and providing for a military dictatorship, which would restore order, as after the great French Revolution. Non-Cooperation is Revolution, and one would not vote for “ Revolution in principle,” because it would be mere blague unless carried into practice, and its practice would depend on circumstances and the possibility of success. Effective Non-Cooperation would demand a very widespread sense of unbearable wrong, capable of dictatorship, military discipline and obedience,

and a power of suffering, endurance and self-sacrifice of which the normal man is quite incapable. A people who crowd cinemas, races, football and cricket matches are obviously not groaning under intolerable wrong, and it is silly to talk to them about revolution, armed or unarmed. To involve "only hatred" is to involve the root of all vices. But, more in detail, Non-Cooperation rapidly and inevitably descends into boycott, social ostracism, denial of freedom in speech or action to all who do not agree with the violent minority, and ultimately a far more intolerable condition than the present ; it will pass into looting, rioting, and murder.

—23 December 1920, *New India*

Revolution may sometimes be justifiable, may be inevitable, may be brought about by intolerable suffering, by intolerable oppression. All we desire to press here is that the refusal of Cooperation is a deliberate paralyzing of Government, and that it ought only to be suggested with the same calculation of forces, the same balancing of resources, the same recognition of responsibility, as the decision to make a revolution. It is not a matter for wild excitement and frenzied platform exhortation, but one for a council of war and the perfecting of a civil and military organization.

Those who are not prepared for this tremendous responsibility had better not indulge in this camouflage of words, but try to realize what they are doing and asking others to do. They are undermining the very basis of Society with singular light-heartedness and irresponsibility. The first step

is already taken by a few. Let all at least think before they take the second.

—May-August 1920, *New India*

... And when Mr. Gandhi's "civil disobedience" threatened law and invited riot and repression, I flung away my popularity to oppose him, and strove in England to improve the then unsatisfactory reforms, and, with many other Indians, helped in widening them and in making them a substantial step towards Home Rule; equally for this, I have fought unflinchingly since April last against Non-Cooperation, the great disruptive movement engineered by the Lords of Darkness against the union of Britain and India as the day of their partnership was rapidly approaching, and that promise of the World-Commonwealth, the dawn of the Indo-British Commonwealth, was on the horizon, the Commonwealth which means World Peace and World Prosperity, and the spiritualizing of Humanity. The desperate struggle which is to decide the destiny of both countries is proceeding, and they will either march forward hand-in-hand for the uplifting of the world, or, torn asunder, will lose their place of leadership—Britain to sink into a second-rate Power, and India to pass into an era of invasion and spoliation, the helpless prey of the northern Asia tribes, from which the strong shield of Britain and her own British-trained warrior sons now protect her.

—December 1920, *The Theosophist*

## ***A REVERSION TO ANARCHY***

I believe that Mr. Gandhi's proposal of Non-Cooperation with the Government, with his fourfold programme of successive stages, and his hope thereby to paralyze the Government and thus to compel its submission to his view of its duty, is wrong in principle and will be disastrous to the country in proportion as it is carried out.

In principle, it is (i) revolutionary: Mr. Gandhi proposes to "paralyze" the Government, to render it powerless, unable to govern. The fact that he does not propose to kill its members does not alter the fact that he is striving to bring about a Revolution, for, whether you kill the Government with machine-guns or by paralysis, the end is the same. You overthrow the Government. At first, Mr. Gandhi proposed to substitute nothing in its stead; now he goes a step further, and says that the people should go to their own courts, form their own police for preserving order, and, presumably, pay taxes to support them.

(ii) Non-Cooperation stirs up hatred between Government and people, setting the people against the Government, which Mr. Gandhi describes as wicked and cruel. In addition to this, it stirs up race-hatred. Its popularity is due to the fact that large numbers of Indians feel bitter resentment against the Government on account of the Panjab atrocities; the people feel helpless in the face of the Government of India's inaction in dealing with the peccant officers, as the Imperial Government bade them to do. The people see in Non-Cooperation a channel for their resentment, and eagerly seize it. The stirring up of race-hatred, is, if possible, more



immediately dangerous than hatred of Government, and we have already seen one murder of an unarmed Englishman by four Musalmans armed with swords. The two who are arrested say that they committed the murder because of the Khilafat speeches. Such result was foreseen and, if Non-Cooperation is accepted as a principle, this one assassination will be the forerunner of many. It is no excuse to say that the murderers were bad characters; violence finds its tools among ignorant fanatics, not among high-principled men. It is all very well for Mr. Gandhi to say that he feels no hatred against the Government he denounces, but only "absence of affection"; he may paralyze and yet be free from hatred, but those who follow him do not share his passivity, nor his self-control.

(iii) Non-Cooperation strikes at the foundation of Society which is based on Cooperation and can only exist through continued Cooperation. It means a reversion to anarchy, a violent breaking of all the mutual ties which bind men together. It will inevitably lead to rioting and bloodshed, which can only have one result—repression and the putting off of all improvement in our civil conditions.

In practice, if I may be excused an Irish bull, it is impracticable. The moment a programme is proposed, the unanimous approval of "Non-Cooperation in principle" becomes a jangle of negatives against Non-Cooperation in practice. The political candidate refuses to boycott the Councils, the lawyer refuses to abandon his practice, the parent declines to withdraw his children from school and college, an immense majority of title-holders and men in honorary posts refuse to surrender them. After twenty-six days.

of proposed action in the Madras Presidency, 22 men had surrendered titles and honorary posts. The only point on which unanimity exists is in advice from those who have not to others who have, to make sacrifices. If such an infinitesimal result accrues, where the sacrifice is comparatively trifling, what will be the microscopic result when the second stage is reached and men are asked to surrender their livelihoods, and throw themselves and their families on the streets? Apart from Mr. Gandhi's programme, it is obvious that Non-Cooperation with Government implies an abandonment of all the conveniences which Government supplies. No one can buy a stamp, nor send a telegram, nor travel by train, without contributing to the support of Government. No one can bring or defend a civil suit, nor register a document, without contributing to the support of Government. If courts are closed by Non-Cooperation, no redress can be had for assault, or robbery, or swindling, or forgery, or any other crime against person or property. Crops will perish for want of irrigation from Government-controlled canals. Famine will result from the stoppage of the transport of goods. Prices will rise yet higher from the same cause. Happily, the common-sense of the people will prevent them from rushing to destruction along the road opened to them. A very small number of the educated classes, judging by present appearances, will accept Mr. Gandhi's programme, though they will applaud him vociferously and cover him with inapposite and irrelevant praises for his saintliness, and profess unlimited reverence for him—strictly in principle.

People say, what will you propose in exchange? If I oppose a plan which leads to inevitable disaster and hopeless

failure to attain its end, the fact that it is in itself ruinous and useless, is sufficient justification for the opposition. I see no immediate remedy for the Panjab atrocities, and, I say so honestly, I see no way for a real remedy short of Home Rule, and I would work the Reforms to the utmost so as to lessen the dangers of foreign rule. I would cooperate with the Government in all useful activities which would lessen poverty, improve industry, conserve the resources of the country for the country. I would utilize every scrap of power which the Reforms Act gives, and by such success gain more, and so advance quickly towards Home Rule. I see no other way, and believing that the Non-Cooperation movement impedes our progress to Home Rule, may indefinitely delay its coming, and in any case, by dividing the efforts of the people, weakens their power, I oppose Non-Cooperation as fervently and persistently as I work for Home Rule.—*Looker-On*, quoted in *Gandhian Non-Cooperation or Shall India Commit Suicide?* (1921)

## THE FARCE OF NON-COOPERATION

The Non-Cooperation problem has entered a most peculiar phase: Non-Cooperation in principle and Cooperation in practice. The constant hammering of a handful of speakers and writers on the absurdity and impossibility of practising Non-Cooperation has had its effect on the public mind. The arguments have so filled the mental atmosphere that the advocates of Non-Cooperation use them unconsciously in favour of their contention that a general programme is impossible unless the collective wisdom of the National Congress can evolve something more acceptable than its

constituent organizations can evolve. If a few dozen people cannot agree on a programme of action, there seems no likelihood that a few thousands will exhibit more uniformity—in fact, the probability is the other way. It seems likely that the Congress will pass an abstract academical resolution, accepting the principle of Non-Cooperation, and will pass a second resolution of the nature of the Amritsar compromise, which each man can interpret in his own way.

At the Madras Provincial Congress Committee a resolution was passed by a majority approving Non-Cooperation “in principle,” but every resolution proposing a definite “programme,” or fragments of a programme, was rejected. The Committee therefore approves the principle, but disapproves the practice—a singularly infructuous decision, which paralyzes Non-Cooperative action instead of the Government. Non-Cooperation could not be practised in its entirety—that would be too inconvenient; everyone must draw the line somewhere. Mr. Gandhi drew *his* line at travelling by train, and so cooperated in making a large revenue for the Government; the speaker drew *his* line at boycotting the Councils; had he not the same right to draw lines as had Mr. Gandhi? There was no logic in politics. Another disapproved of boycotting the Courts; another of boycotting the schools and colleges. And so it went on. Finally every programme resolution was boycotted, and the principle was left high and dry. . . .

Non-Cooperation with the Government means that you set out to “paralyze the Government,” and therefore must not help or support it in any way. You must not go by train, use post or telegraph, hold any Government office

paid or unpaid, seek redress at any court, register any document, accept protection from policeman or soldier, pay any tax. Other proposals are a social boycott of Government officers and of all Britons—even of those who cooperate with them—an industrial boycott of British goods, and so on. There are no lengths to which some people are not prepared to go (in words) to show their resentment and hatred. The real attraction of the movement is, I think, that it is a channel for resentment without entailing much loss or danger, unless you accept a programme. The really honest Non-Cooperators accept a definite programme and are prepared to carry it out. Most talk big and act little.

Is it legitimate to pass a resolution approving "the principle of Non-Cooperation"? No one who knows the history of Nations can deny that a Nation in bondage has a right to break its bonds, if the majority so wish. There is no right in one Nation to rule another which is unwilling to be so ruled; no right resides in the strength of a large Nation holding down a small one; a sword is not a legitimate sceptre. The right to revolt against a foreign yoke, or even against a home tyranny, has been asserted successfully in English, Scotch, French, Italian history, to say nothing of the American Revolution or the late War. No democrat can deny it. If a Government may, theoretically, under certain circumstances, be overthrown by force, so may it theoretically be overthrown by paralysis. An unarmed weak Nation, finding its Government intolerable, may wholly withdraw itself, leave the Government isolated, with nothing to govern and no power to administer. But just as it is silly to assert the right to make a Revolution and create a street riot, so

it is silly to assert the empty right to Non-Cooperate, and have a few futile resignations. The Congress by passing such a resolution will only make the Nation ridiculous in the eyes of the world.

But it is important that everyone should understand that Non-Cooperation is a revolutionary method, as much as taking up arms. Attempts to transform Government by reforms are constitutional ; to destroy a Government whether by machine-gun or paralysis is revolutionary, and to assert an empty right to kill by guns or by paralysis, when you can do neither, is childish. India should not lower herself in the eyes of the world by such empty assertions that she cannot carry out. Cannot? Yes, cannot, because her people are not sufficiently united nor sufficiently in earnest to make the sacrifices necessary to win freedom by a sudden leap. Mr. Montagu never spoke truer words than when he said : " When India is determined to have Home Rule, she will have it." Meanwhile, empty, useless resolutions are not consistent with her self-respect or her dignity.—*The Leader* (1919) quoted in *Gandhian Non-Cooperation or Shall India Commit Suicide?* (1921)

How different a sight is presented by the Councils with their respective Governments working harmoniously for the peoples' good and these joyous ranks of boys of both Nations mingling as brothers, from the Non-Cooperation movement, motived by race hatred, by the desire for revenge, and intended by very many to wrench away the bond between Britain and India. That mischievous crusade is, I think, weakening. The giving up of titles has been a ludicrous failure. The boycotting of the Law Courts has

been taken up by very few. The boycotting of schools caused a sudden, excited exodus in Aligarh and Calcutta, but in both places nearly all the boys have returned to school and college. No other places have been seriously affected, but the preaching of disobedience to parents and general breaking of discipline has entirely demoralized the students. They break up public meetings, abusing speakers in foul language and using physical violence, blows, and kicks. The most respected public men are not allowed to address a public meeting, schoolboys and young collegians shouting them down, and creating a pandemonium by stamping, yelling, blowing whistles and horns, and shouting "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai!" Mr. Gandhi, having failed with most of the intelligentsia, is now beginning to stir up the masses, who have real grievances, and are easily inflamed. There lies the danger-point at present.

—March 1921, *The Theosophist*

## **"IN DEFIANCE OF EXPERIENCE AND COUNSEL"**

After weeks of "furious thinking day and night," in search of a formula, Gandhiji has at last evolved one which is embodied in the resolution on Civil Disobedience passed by the Working Committee of the Congress. The movement is to be confined to those who accept non-violence as a creed, and the Congress as a whole will have no greater responsibility for its conduct than that of an interested but passive spectator. Singularly little news came through the heavy veil of secrecy which surrounded the proceedings of

the Working Committee at Ahmedabad ; but it is at least clear that even in the Working Committee, the members of which were all selected at Lahore by Gandhiji and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the Cabinet plan, there was some doubt expressed as to the wisdom of rushing ahead. The terms of the resolution, which were drafted by Gandhiji himself, entrust him with the powers of a dictator. Civil Disobedience is to be started by him, with the assistance of his closest followers, "as and when they desire and in the manner and to the extent they decide." At a later stage, when the movement has made a definite commencement, it is realized that the distinction now drawn between those who accept non-violence as a creed and those who regard it as a mere policy, cannot be maintained. The Working Committee therefore hopes that, "in the event of a mass movement taking place," lawyers and students will withdraw their co-operation from the Government and throw themselves into the struggle. It is futile, perhaps, to point out the glaring inconsistency of the formula, because Gandhiji is unimpressed by a charge of that description. Recently, in the course of an article in his paper, *Young India*, on "My Inconsistencies," he propounded the interesting theory that a man of his position was entitled to such a luxury. But lesser mortals than he cannot help observing with some anxiety that when the mass movement has developed, "all those who are rendering voluntary cooperation to the Government" may not belong to the school which accepts non-violence as a creed, or even as a policy. However much the Working Committee may enjoin complete non-violence, there is a considerable body of men in the country who look upon it



as childish and absurd. Gandhiji had ample evidence of it at Delhi in the bomb outrage on the Viceroy's train, and at Lahore in the formidable opposition to the resolution condemning it.

The movement for Non-Cooperation failed in 1922, in spite of the more favourable circumstances under which it was started. There was not, then, a movement frankly abjuring non-violence, challenging Gandhiji's principles and leadership, such as the organized one which is to be found in many parts of India today. The Muslims as a community threw their entire weight on Gandhiji's side as a protest against the terms of the Turkish Treaty. Can he claim, now, even a fraction of that allegiance? Moreover, there was over the whole country, a wave of bitter anguish, caused by the Amritsar Tragedy. The history of the Reforms, subsequent to the collapse of Non-Cooperation, may be summed up in a phrase, the steady hardening of opinion in England and the ascendancy of reactionary forces at the India Office. If the country has been able to effect a partial recovery from the disastrous after-effects of the failure of Gandhiji's movement, it must be attributed to the unity of all parties, achieved first on the boycott of the Simon Commission and then over the Nehru Report. But Gandhiji has no use now for that unity, built up amidst difficulties and after much toil. The Nehru Report is scrapped, and the problem of inter-communal unity must wait, for its solution, the establishment of "Purna Swarāj."

Regrettable as is Gandhiji's decision to inaugurate a campaign at this stage which must, for all his precautions, result sooner or later in outbursts of violence, and therefore is

doomed to failure, on other grounds it is equally open to criticism. He laid down at Lahore that appreciation of the Viceroy's efforts to bring about an honourable and friendly settlement of the Indian problem was a vital consideration with him. Since then, while stressing complete Independence as his immediate objective, he has not ceased to hope for participation in the Round Table Conference, and recently put forward eleven points before the Government, on the acceptance of which he would pledge the Congress to cooperation. He is willing to see what the Liberals and other parties which believe in the Conference bring as a result of their labours. He cannot conceal his anxiety that the forces of violence will come to the surface. And yet, with so much to lose, with the prospects of failure writ large on his campaign, he must take the plunge, in defiance alike of past experience and the counsels of those who have been his colleagues for many years.

—20 February 1930, *New India*

Now I have opposed Non-Cooperation from its palmy days of triumph when its crowds hissed at me on the platform, drowned my voice with motor horns and other relevant arguments of Non-Cooperation, and I oppose it now, in the day of its revival. I regard it as a setback to all sane political activity, and as inevitably resulting in violence and bloodshed, despite its talk of non-violence. I argued against it in the Congress, but the partial failure of the loud speakers made it impossible for large numbers to hear me. Bengal has changed since the days of its greatest leader, Desha-bandhu C. R. Das, and emotional, inexperienced youth is predominant. Sane political action is contemptuously

rejected, and unbridled language and threats of violence rule the day. With this part of this Congress, Mr. Gandhi is unpopular, as it objects to non-violence. . . .

—3 January 1929, *New India*

## 5. THE VIOLENCE OF “NON-VIOLENCE”

The Non-Cooperation movement has produced an unparalleled crop of hatred, violence, and lawlessness, as all of us who have lived through it know.

—April 1924, *The Theosophist*

### **THE RAVENING WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING**

The tendency to violence is distinctly the result of the stirring up of hatred against the Government by the continual attacks on it as Satanic, inhuman and bloodthirsty by the three leaders of the Non-Cooperation Party, imitated by the more vocal among their followers. It is useless to blame the Governments concerned in stopping rioting when ignorant and youthful crowds express in action the hatred and contempt expressed in words by their most responsible leaders. Ever since this movement began, I have pointed out that, despite the sheep's clothing of non-violence, the ravening wolf of violence could be seen through its cape. The forecast has proved true in many cases where the rioting was on a small scale, and was quickly prevented from spreading. It is now proved on a large scale by the revolt

of the Moplas on the West Coast—a revolt which is likely to break up the Hindu-Muslim Entente—which began in a peaceful and beneficent form in the Congress-League Scheme but has been converted into a danger to public safety by being diverted into the Khilafat agitation, with its unfairness and constant menace to peace, and threats of helping an Afghan invasion. When Mr. Yakub Hasan was imprisoned on the refusal to execute a security bond, I pointed out the danger of his addressing a peculiarly excitable population. I was rebuked and told that the Moplas were now, under the calming influence of Non-Cooperation, a peaceable and law-abiding population. I happened to know that some years before the Hindus had petitioned for the retention of a military camp in the district, because of their fear of another Mopla rising, and had been warned of this constant danger by well-informed inhabitants of the Mopla area. I therefore supported the Government in their refusal to allow inflammatory speeches in the district. Dropping lighted matches in a powder magazine is not a desirable occupation. The outbreak in Cochin emphasized the danger, and now we have what is practically a revolt of a whole community. Will the lesson be lost on the speakers who inspire fierce hatred of the Government? It seems doubtful, as we already see suggestions that the Government will follow the example of the Amritsar tragedy. There is no justification for the suggestion, for the Amritsar mob did little harm compared to that done by the Mopla fanatics, and its outrages were confined to a single day and the city had been quiet for a whole day before General Dyer and his troops arrived. Indian papers edited by Englishmen and Hindus

might at least remember that it is their own people who are jointly attacked by the Muslim fanatics. It is their own people whom the Governments are striving to protect. They might at least withhold criticism till life and property are secure. But hatred of the Government is stronger than the lives of their own. But this uprising is naturally weakening the Non-Cooperation movement by demonstrating its danger.—Address to the Reform Conference, 29 August 1921, *Speeches and Writings of Annie Besant*, 3rd Edition by G. A. Natesan.

The non-violence of Mr. Gandhi wins no real response from the Muslim; indeed Moulanas Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali always frankly said so. The alliance between an essentially militant Faith with its centre of allegiance outside India, and the non-violent Non-Cooperation of the Hindu ascetic has always been an unnatural one and was confessedly a temporary one. It has come to an end amid the terrible riots of the present year and the Muslim claim to dominate in the Panjab. Hinduism is essentially a non-proselytizing and non-aggressive religion; Islam is essentially a proselytizing and aggressive religion. If Hinduism is to imbibe the latter spirit no peace in India is possible.

—October 1923, *The Theosophist*

## **GANDHIJI'S "SOUL-FORCE" !**

The centre of the great struggle is now shifted to India, and the ghastly hate incited by Mr. Gandhi is the mark of the activity of the enemies of mankind. He is becoming more and more violent, and now speaks of "when we draw the sword." Failing among the educated and the mature,

he now carries on a destructive propaganda among the immature, stirs up youths to disobey their parents and teachers, seduces them from the great institutions built up by patriotic Indians by long years of sacrifice. He specially denounces the Musalman University of Aligarh, the Hindu University of Benares, and the Sikh Khalsa College, calling for the destruction of these three, "at all costs." He seems to be madly set against education, wishing the youths to devote themselves to violent propaganda. They attended my Bombay lectures, on November 3rd and 4th by hundreds; on the first occasion, it was possible to deliver the lecture between the interruptions; but on the second day, the first day's proceedings having been reported to Mr. Gandhi, who was in Bombay, and not having been disapproved by him, they increased their numbers, and kept up an incessant uproar by stamping, yelling, clapping and blowing whistles, through which it was impossible to speak, so after three-quarters of an hour the chairman dissolved the meeting. This is Mr. Gandhi's idea of "soul-force," and his method of educating youths in citizenship. It is easy to see whither he is leading them.

---November 1920, *The Adyar Bulletin*

## ***THE DEATH-BLOW TO THE CONGRESS***

Things went fast during the year 1920, and controversy grew bitter. For Mr. Gandhi had launched the Non-Cooperation movement in the early spring, in order to help the Khilafat Committee, formed to work on behalf of Turkey and the Khilafat, and had rigorously confined it to that one question only. He formulated four distinct steps: giving up

of honorary titles, leaving Government service, leaving the Police and the Army, refusing to pay taxes. The fifth step, added by Maulana Shaukat Ali, was to be the independence of India. The four steps were to be taken successively. The proposal appealed very little to the Hindus, as they cared nothing for the temporal or spiritual power of the Khalifa, while the Indian Muslims declared that the temporal power as Sultan was necessary to the integrity of the Khilafat, as only a Sovereign Power could perform the duty of the Khalifa to protect the Holy Places. Hence, at the end of May, finding that the Hindus were little attracted, the All-India Congress Committee at Benares added, as reasons for Non-Cooperation, the Panjab atrocities and the inadequacy of the Reforms. Into this Mr. Gandhi threw all his power, stating that Swarâj would thus be speedily gained. This addition of Swarâj, made by his own initiative, and his "ultimatum" to the Viceroy, to expire on July 31st, failing which, the first step would be taken on August 1st—the others to follow successively one after the other, the next being taken up as soon as the preceding one had failed—raised immense enthusiasm and carried all before them. The idea of Swarâj, gained by successive boycotts of Government, fascinated those who did not stop to ask whether an adequate response would be made to the proclamation, and the Special Congress of Calcutta was held in wild excitement, all opposition being violently interrupted; it formulated various boycotts—of Councils, Courts, Colleges, English goods, etc., and this although Mr. Gandhi preached non-violence, and had condemned, earlier in the year, boycott as a form of violence. Many delegates left the Congress

in disgust over the denial of free speech, but finally a poll was taken among those who remained and Mr. Gandhi triumphed. To refuse to obey the Congress "mandate" was to be a traitor to the Motherland, and while non-violence was preached from Non-Cooperation platforms, the violence of the language used by Mr. Gandhi and his lieutenants was translated into violence of action. The latter was always repudiated by Mr. Gandhi, but the disapproval was disregarded, since he continued to inflame the passions of his audience and his readers by the unmeasured violence of his own speech. The movement took on the revolutionary character which was its own logical sequence, and the boycott of goods became the boycott of persons. Mr. Gandhi was made dictator, and all power centred in his hands; he declared "war" on the Government, the Government was to be "brought to its knees," "paralyzed," "destroyed."

The result was deplorable; social relations with the disobedient were boycotted; they were driven away from wells and food shops; hartals were enforced by threats; things went from bad to worse; meetings were broken up by violence, and free speech disappeared from public platforms; funeral processions were assaulted, corpses were thrown down, even dug up and mutilated; men, women, and even children were assaulted in the streets, shops were looted and burnt, policemen were murdered, sometimes with shocking cruelty, unspeakable punishments were inflicted by Non-Cooperation Panchayats on men and women; riots and bloodshed occurred; disobedience of law, merely because it was law, became widespread, and threatened general anarchy. At last Government,



instead of being paralyzed, was unobliging enough to become active, and declared Responsive Non-Cooperation. The violent side of Non-Cooperation has consequently disappeared. The failure of its various methods has led to the withdrawal of its leading men, and most of the names of the present leaders of the extreme left are unknown outside their own localities, though the Non-Cooperation Press decorates them with high-sounding titles.

Non-Cooperation has now become admittedly lawlessness. Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, the best-known of the new set, who edits Mr. Gandhi's journal, has just issued a pamphlet in which he writes : " Obedience to law has been the rule in the case of all the legitimate prohibitions and orders, and disobedience has been the exception. It is time we adopted a different policy and gave battle to Government." The first sentence describes the condition of all civilized Nations. The second sentence—to which we add another that precedes and explains it : " The Government should be compelled to realize that we obey or disobey according to our decision"—is anarchy. The " our " is left vague. The hollowness of the Non-Cooperation movement is shown by the results of Mr. Gandhi's imprisonment. When he was acclaimed by tens of thousands, it was said the Nation was with him. When few, except the editors of the Non-Cooperation Press, protest against his imprisonment, it is said how great is his influence that the people remain peaceful. They shout his name when they riot, but they do not work for his release. This fork of the road leads to the lawlessness of the mob, caused by the lawlessness of the leaders ;

"our decision" in the mob, meaning utter following of their own criminal propensities.

As for politics, the present leaders have none. Warned by the impossible promises made by Mr. Gandhi with the wrecks of which the road of Non-Cooperation is strewn, they refrain from proclaiming Swarâj in a year. Congress is broken up by constantly recurring fissions. The *Bombay Chronicle* blames the inefficiency of the leaders, but all the efficient leaders have been driven away. The bitter prophecy that Mr. Gandhi would dig the grave of the Congress has proved true, and the sooner the fragments of that once splendid body are buried out of sight the better. It has reached the anarchy to which Non-Cooperation sought to reduce Society, and the "leaders" prate of discipline and obedience, after they have laboured to destroy both. Their curses, levelled at law and order, have quickly "come home to roost."

—1923, *A Retrospect and a Decision*

The Non-Cooperation Movement, now abandoned, has wrought fatal harm to Bengal and has, for the time, robbed her of her old place in National politics.

—February 1925, *The Theosophist*

There appears to be some hope of the revival of healthy political life in this country, after the setback it received from the Non-Cooperation movement. A plan of definite advance in the direction of Home Rule, to be carried out through the Legislatures, is being discussed, and I hope that it may bear good fruit. Steady and rational political work has been pushed from the field by theatrical bonfires,

exciting picketing, “Swarâj in a year,” varied with occasional rioting.

—October 1929, *The Theosophist*

## **FROM ANARCHY TO MARTIAL RULE**

In 1919, when first the idea of passive resistance was mooted in connection with the Rowlatt Bill, I wrote in this journal some articles on “Law,” seeing the dangers which would follow if the idea spread of breaking laws, hitherto obeyed, at the orders of a Committee. Any student of history knows the peril of the spread of the spirit of lawlessness in a civilized community. The removal of quarrels from the arbitrament of force to that of the Courts of Law is the measure of civilization in every country. It is the protection of the weak against the strong, the maintenance of order against violence. Hence good citizens, as I pointed out in 1919, if compelled by conscience to break any particular law, were always careful meticulously to acknowledge the supremacy of law, and willingly to submit themselves to the penalty attached to the breach of the special law they disobeyed. Organized disobedience of laws, arranged by a Committee blindly to be obeyed, in order to “discredit the Government,” is a crime against the Nation far greater than that of armed rebellion, greater because it strikes at the very foundation of social security, whereas the leaders of the armed rebellion enforce law in the regions they occupy, and if they seek to destroy a Government they sternly maintain order by Martial Law in the part of the land they control.

I also pointed out at the time, and have repeatedly reiterated the warning, that the flouting of civil authority would encourage the criminal classes, and increase crimes of violence. Civil law may be superseded by Martial Law in times of upheaval, but that is only the substitution of sterner, sharper, swifter Law for the Civil, in order that the prevalence of violence within a disturbed area may be checked, and general disregard of Law may not prevail. But no warnings from any source availed against the spread of the spirit of anarchy. Youths were urged to disobey their parents and teachers, to disregard any orders of Magistrates or of the Government, and to prove their patriotism—Heaven save the mark!—by flouting any order issued by the Civil authority, that conflicted with their methods of enforcing their own usurped authority over the citizens who did not acknowledge it.

The natural results followed. Not only did many riots break out as a result of picketing; of assaulting people in the open street who did not wear the clothing or the head-gear approved of by the youthful sumptuary authorities; of the setting on fire of liquor shops, or violently robbing people of liquor they had bought; of assailing the police and provoking tumults against them; but the spirit of lawlessness spread among the normal criminal class and the potential criminal class which fringes it, and the small riots of the N.-C.O.s were reinforced by these lower social strata, who took the opportunity presented to them by the normally respectable classes to carry on their war against Society. As the police were more and more employed to protect the property and freedom of action of persons

who carried on trades banned by the "volunteers," their vigilance was necessarily diverted from their usual duty of preventing crime, and hence crimes of violence, dacoities, thefts, largely increased in numbers. Attacks of armed dacoits on villages have become numerous; assaults on individuals have multiplied; convicts have been rendered more insubordinate; and the respect for law, which protects social order more than the police, has disappeared. To support "law and order" is to be jeered at, and to be a "good citizen" has become a term of reproach. Any punishment inflicted on those who deliberately flout authority with the intention of provoking arrest, is condemned as "repression." Volunteers were called on to provoke arrest with the proclaimed object of paralyzing the Government, and discrediting it in the eyes of all.

A yet more sinister phenomenon has appeared. When a grievance existed, a real grievance, it was exploited to provoke disturbance. The Lucknow agrarian riots were the first open example of this. Then a reforming party among the Sikhs began to resort to violence instead of appealing to the law against Mahants who were considered to be unworthy of their position. . . . Unhappily the N.-C.O. influence prevailed in the Panjab, and the reforming Sikhs embraced its fatal method. The few-inch-long kirpan was turned into a sword, and the reformers organized into bands to take possession of shrines by main force, evicting Mahants they regarded as peccant. Early in their proceedings, a Mahant showed fight, and the massacre at Nankana occurred. The question then arose: should reformers and Mahants be allowed to fight out their quarrels while the Government

stood aside and let them murder each other, or should it protect the legal holders of property, and bring about legislation for the reform of abuses? Government elected the latter plan. . . . Yet the N.-C.O. press describes the Akali attempts to take possession of land which is not theirs as a holy struggle! Religion is used to sanction cutting down another man's trees! All the exaggerated writing is intended to serve the political purpose of discrediting the Government; it is part of the N.-C.O. campaign. . . .

Is everyone who considers that the use of property by its owners is not according to his ideas, to be at liberty to gather a mob, trespass on the owner's property, and destroy his works, or his trees, or buildings? If so, law is abolished, no one is secure, Government disappears, and only the strong arm rules.

It is time that sober-minded people considered seriously the condition into which we are drifting. Is Home Rule to be achieved, only to find a country which is in a condition of anarchy, resistant of all discipline, defiant of all authority, where everyone is a law to himself, enforcing his will by mobs, or trampled on by superior force? Such is the condition to which the N.-C.O.'s are . . . reducing India. Good men side with the anarchists because the police meet successive bands of trespassers with lathis. Lurid accounts may be written of any street-fight, but organized attempts to seize property by force are resisted by the police in every civilized country. Religion is prostituted by being made the pretext of deliberate aggression on the rights of others. The N.-C.O.'s are deliberately endeavouring to substitute force for law, and their pretence of non-violence

cannot blind reasonable persons to the reality of their violence.

—18 September 1922, *New India*

Has there ever been a popular movement in India which has stirred up hatred and led to such brutal cruelties and oppression? Read the N.-C.O. Press, with its incessant abuse of all persons who oppose it, its shameless falsifications, its use of violent language inevitably followed by violent acts. Consider the breaking up of meetings by Non-Co-operators, their howling down of speakers, their unburying and mutilating of corpses, their intrusions on death-beds of Cooperators, their pulling off of caps and coats from men in the open streets, and of saris from women. Take the insults shouted at men and women, who deserved honour for their services to India, by callow youths, who trampled on reverence to parents, to age, to patriots who would not repeat their shibboleths, and all to yells of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai!" Take the abominable cruelties inflicted by Non-Co-operation village courts, the picketing accompanied by blows, spittings, looting, firing of shops and violent thefts from purchasers of foreign cloth or liquor. Take the ruinous feelings of hatred spread among the younger generation, such as we have never seen before in India. Or take the more terrible outbreaks, the attacking of police stations, the killing of constables, the firing of houses, and the flinging of cruelly beaten police alive into the fire with petroleum poured on them. And take, worst of all, the general contempt of law inculcated by Mr. Gandhi's followers, as when Mr. C. Rajagopalachari wrote that they should disobey all

laws, good and bad. It is idle to say that the huge crop of violence, which practically put an end to public meetings and free speech in India, was not directly due to the spirit of hatred and lawlessness roused by Mr. Gandhi's violent language and the epithets he applied to Government, since it is only after his imprisonment and the admitted decay of the Non-Cooperation Movement that those of us who were known as its opponents have been able to hold a public meeting in peace and without facing insults in the streets. Some, like myself, have also been financially ruined by it, and have had, when we could no longer increase the debts incurred, to close our schools and colleges, so popular and flourishing before Mr. Gandhi began his crusade. I have barely managed to keep *New India* alive, despite the crusade against it carried on by the Non-Cooperators.

The only useful projects strengthened by him have been the social ones, like village industries, temperance (omitting picketing), swadeshi, the abolition of untouchability. The exaggeration of some of these has done harm, such as spreading the absurd idea that wearing khaddar will bring Swarâj. All the above have been patiently worked for through long years by many, without their accompanying them by all the violence and ill-feeling which have stained the good name of India. How illusory has been the result of the last four years was proved when Mr. Gandhi was personally absent from the field. We have the final result of his movement in the partial wrecking of the Reforms and the local restoration of autocracy, with the cry of mass refusal to pay taxes as a menace in the near future, a probable creator of rioting and bloodshed, unless reason conquers



unreason, and respect for good law replaces the lawlessness caused by Mr. Gandhi's movement.

—April 1924, *The Theosophist*

Alas for India, if its leaders prefer sentimentality to Justice, and popularity to Right Action! Political prisoners may be safely released, after Home Rule is established. But to deprive the existing Government irresponsible as it is, of all power to strangle an insurrectionary movement, admitted to exist, until a Home Rule Government has taken over the reins, is merely to ensure a period of anarchy, to be followed, as always, by a military despotism, and the disappearance for the time of all hope of liberty.

—30 January 1924, *New India*

## **MR. GANDHI CHOOSES WAR**

Many have been blaming the Government of India for a policy of drastic repression which has not only been unduly severe, but leads nowhere. Such censure ignores the fact that the policy of Mr. Gandhi has been deliberately and intentionally provocative and that defiance of law for the mere sake of defiance encourages a spirit of lawlessness among the ignorant and the criminal classes, which strikes at the very foundations of Society. If the present Government permitted this to continue unchecked, they would bequeath to their Indian successors the painful task of reducing to order the chaos they had permitted, instead of handing over to them a well-ordered and law-abiding people.

Moreover, quiet citizens, who form the bulk of the Nation, have a right to demand from their Government protection of their liberty and property, and no Government worthy of

the name could continue to disregard the urgent appeals for protection, which have poured in during the last month and more. H.E. the Viceroy's speech to the Deputation, which waited on him, has shown that not only he, but all the members of his Government are as anxious to avoid repression as is every one in the land. No one who heard him could doubt the absolute sincerity and earnestness of his words. In reference to the invitation of disinterested intermediaries, His Excellency has indicated a way out of the difficulties, so as to avoid the terrible consequences to which the present policy of the Non-Cooperators must lead. He and his Government, in order to create a calm atmosphere for discussion, had expressed willingness to suspend the present policy, but no response had come from those who were disturbing the public peace.

The whole responsibility, therefore, now rests on Mr. Gandhi and the Non-Cooperators, for the Government cannot remain quiescent in the presence of intimidation and the paralyzing of the peaceful life of the community. Mr. Gandhi has thrown away a splendid opportunity of stating his policy in the calm and quiet discussion among men of different opinions. He might have restored peace to the country and ensured constitutional progress. He has chosen the path of law-breaking and revolution, which can only lead to bloodshed and anarchy, and he has made no response to the generous willingness of a powerful Government to listen to himself and his followers. Criticism of the policy forced on the Government has been plentiful.

It is time to recognize that His Excellency has done all that is possible to open the door to a peaceful settlement,

and while he refuses a futile discussion in the present disorder, he has carefully left the door open, should wiser counsels prevail in the Non-Cooperation camp. We cannot too highly commend the lofty spirit in which he has envisaged the subject, and we still hope that Mr. Gandhi may try to emulate His Excellency's generous tone. His Excellency has received from the King-Emperor a solemn charge to uphold law and to defend order. Can any one venture to say that he should be a traitor to his duty, that he should surrender his trust into the hands of those who disturb the public peace and would let loose on the Motherland the forces that are desolating Malabar? Mr. Gandhi elects for continuing war [unless there be] an unthinkable surrender of the Government to his arbitrary mandate. Let the consequence of his rejection of an honourable peace lie on his own head.

—(By wire) 22 December 1921, *New India*

## 21 YEARS AGO

The suggestion was made by me in the *Leader* that an informal group of people should, on their own motion, approach H.E. the Viceroy, and ask him to call a Conference of the leaders of various political schools, and see if some conclusion could be arrived at which would remove the prevailing unrest, and enable steady progress to be made along constitutional roads to the goal of Home Rule, which all progressive and patriotic Indians desire to reach as speedily as possible. It is true that the sudden and enormous changes implied in the popular slogan of the moment are not easily reducible to definite proposals, for

these appear to be petty and mean beside the rosy and golden clouds round a great ideal. Home Rule, Swarâj, must be clothed in methods and details, and these are matters for the brain to construct, not for the heart to sing. It is methods and details which Liberals and National Home Rulers have to propose, and these fall coldly on the ear of excited crowds, accustomed to revel in appeals to their emotions, with never a practical word as to the relation between the glowing periods and prosaic drudgery of political work. Young men enjoy the novelty of picketing or urging shopkeepers to close their shops, of making drunkards ridiculous. But asked as to how all or any of these bring nearer the day of Swarâj, they only cry : " Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai ! " Yet all the excitement and the great hopes aroused are drifting the country rapidly to the precipice of revolution, below which toss the seething waves of anarchy. The aggravation and persistent provocation of the bulk of the citizens by the noisy, violent interference with their ordinary life, have provoked a reaction against their tormentors, and an angry determination to resist what had become an intolerable nuisance, to resist by violence the violence which hampers their activities. Thus, we are threatened with street brawling between rival organizations, and when Government step in to protect public order, both sides are inclined to unite in crying out against repression.

Under these circumstances, it seems reasonable that some effort should be made to prevent the growth of exasperation, some opening should be given for those who demand immediate Swarâj to state by what means they propose to bring it about. A proclamation by the Congress will not

establish Swarāj. It may produce bloodshed and looting in a particular area, such as followed the proclamation of the Khilafat Raj in Malabar, but that only means a cry for protection from the mass of the people. If the Congress, as was threatened, proclaims a Republic, a few people may refuse to pay taxes to the Government, but they will not pay them to the new officials. The refusal is likely to be followed by the rising of the Have-Nots against the Haves, and these will pay no more attention to the exhortations of the "leaders" than the Bombay crowd paid to Mr. Gandhi.

It seems, then, an opportune time to make an appeal for peace, before actual sporadic war breaks out, and the Government is forced to resort, however unwillingly, to defend itself and the innocent majority from the loosening of all the bonds which hold Society together, by the only means left when law is derided, the last appeal to force.

Let those who declare themselves as the enemies of the present rule formulate clearly their demands, so that those who are in favour of constitutional advance instead of direct action may see if a *modus vivendi* can be found. Let us ask the Viceroy to invite representatives of the opposed views to meet in Conference, and seek a way out of the present dilemma. Two years of unrest and struggle are surely enough. Let common counsel lead us into the path of peace.

Since the above was written, a deputation has waited on the Viceroy, and he replied to the memorial in a frank and sympathetic speech, but was unable to grant our request, owing to the intransigent attitude of Mr. Gandhi, who would not even suspend hostilities for the period during which the preparations for the Conference were made and

the Conference itself would meet. Even commanders on the field of battle agree to an armistice, if there be any hope of peace, while the terms are under discussion. But Mr. Gandhi is a law unto himself. On that, however, I wired an article last night, and need say no more. The Viceroy has impressed on us that the door is still open, but we cannot go through it while Mr. Gandhi remains obdurate. He chooses war. And I have only to add, what I have steadily repeated, that I stand by the Government of the King-Emperor and the British connection.

—24 December 1921, *New India*

## AS ALWAYS— GANDHIJI'S OBSTINACY

Great efforts are being made by the N.-C.O. Press to persuade its easily gullible readers that the failure of the attempts to find a way out by a Conference lies on the shoulders of the Viceroy instead of on those of Mr. Gandhi. But sophistry cannot change facts, although it may successfully camouflage them for the unwary and the ignorant. Nothing can alter the fact that "civil disobedience" was decided upon on November 4th, and that the notification, which Mr. Gandhi pretends was its cause, was issued on November 17th. Nothing can alter the fact that the Viceroy was ready to release all prisoners taken under the notification, if the hartal at Calcutta on the day of the Prince's visit was called off and civil disobedience suspended; not that Mr. Gandhi said he made no conditions to Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas and Pandit Hridayanath Kunzru in Gujarat, and

sent telegrams which outstripped their train to Calcutta, making impossible conditions. As they said, he slammed the door against the Conference. Finding his action disapproved of, some well-known persons call a Consultative Conference, and Mr. Gandhi, who points out that he is not a member, goes to the Conference and shows himself as a dictator of terms to which the Government must submit before he will go to a Conference. The position he has created being one of triumph for himself and humiliation and abandonment of duty by the Government, the Viceroy refuses to accept it. The N.-C.O. Press proclaims that the failure is the fault of the Viceroy. Mr. Gandhi, with the airs of a conqueror, sends an ultimatum to be accepted within seven days. The Government replies quickly with a carefully reasoned and irrefutable communication, declining his impossible terms. Mr. Gandhi issues a crafty reply to cover his defeat.

### *The Terms*

What were the terms on which Mr. Gandhi would enter the Conference? The unconditional release of all prisoners, that they might review the situation with him and decide whether they would start civil disobedience or not. Obviously, if they decided to start it, a Conference became absurd. The suspension of hartals and of actual civil disobedience was offered in return for the release of the prisoners. But recruiting for volunteers was to go on, volunteers being persons who have as object the carrying out of the Dictator's orders, aimed at the destruction of the Government! The result of the Conference would therefore be: the release of those who had defied the Government,

so that they might take up their old work ; the strengthening of the revolutionary party by the enlistment of young men who have been the cause already of much violence and bloodshed, and whom no pledge can bind ; the discrediting and humiliation of the Government in the face of the world, and the practical destruction of its authority in India. These, of course, are Mr. Gandhi's avowed objects, but can he suppose that the Government is composed of fools who will help him to attain them ? How different is this pettifogging attempt to drive a Shylock's bargain with the Government, from the noble generosity of the Viceroy, that there should be no humiliation of either party, no triumph of the one over the other. . . .

—13 February 1922, *New India*

### ***“ BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM ”***

Since the Government published the fact that Mr. Gandhi's arrest had been ordered when he had gone to Bardoli to open his no-tax campaign, and had been suspended on his sudden collapse, people have been watching the course of events, feeling that, while the Government had shown unexampled patience and forbearance with his violent abuse, they had obviously determined that there was a limit which they would not allow him to overstep. When he again made a somersault at Delhi, and returned by “ modifications ” to the pre-Chauri Chaura position, it was evidently likely that his challenge would again be lifted, and that the Government would also revert to its position of stopping his activities. Consequently rumours of his arrest again began to



fly about, and no one would be surprised if it took place. The issue has become one of lawlessness or order, and a lawlessness of increasing menace.

We have read of a large band of armed Sikhs entering a station, refusing to pay for tickets, and seizing the accommodation they required. On their arrival at their destination, the police were not strong enough to stop them, and difficulties were only smoothed away by a rich Sikh, who paid their fares. Again we read of armed "Alika" bands, belonging to a class below the Kisans, parading the United Provinces, challenging the rents of Zamindars and threatening violence. In another Province, thousands of Bhils appear, and become a menace to the plain-dwellers.

Mr. Gandhi's repeated denunciations of the Government as Satanic, inhuman, bloodthirsty, his encouragement of lads to organize as volunteers and to disregard the orders of the Government and the laws of the State, are bearing their natural crop of bitter fruit, and all the turbulent enemies of Society, as in every Revolution, are coming out of their normal hiding-places, thinking that their time has come. Under these circumstances it is evident that the author of the general lawlessness cannot long be left as the storm centre, despite his nauseating expressions of "affection" for the British people, published in the *Bombay Chronicle* of March 8.

Unfortunately the insults to the Prince of Wales, carried out by his orders in every town the Prince visited, have deeply angered the Nation for which he has so suddenly developed affection, and the result is the strengthening of the reactionaries in Britain, who have long been thirsting

for Mr. Montagu's overthrow ; India has lost her best friend in Britain, and her champion in the Cabinet. The greater is the need to rally round the Government here. When the choice is between Government and Revolution, anarchy and order, violence and protection, no sane and civilized man should hesitate for a moment. Malabar stands as a result of the Khilafat agitation, nursed and fostered by Mr. Gandhi, while the ever-lengthening list of riots and the spread of utter lawlessness, with its accompanying increased number of dacoities and other crimes of violence, are the outcome of the Congress activities ordered by him, the intimidation, the picketing, the outrages on the dead, and the cruelties to women. We desire the " repression " of these crimes by the ordinary laws of the land, for the object of the laws is to repress crimes, wherever they occur.

We want to work for Autonomy in the Provinces, for Responsibility in the Central Government, and this work is hindered by the irresponsibility and violence of Mr. Gandhi's followers. They have destroyed civic peace, public discussion, liberty of speech, the right of meeting, and they exercise an exasperating tyranny. All lovers of Freedom will rejoice when their heavy yoke is broken.

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The above was written in Delhi, before the news of Mr. Gandhi's arrest arrived, and I have nothing to add to it, after the arrest, except that fact. As shown above, I considered that his yielding to the pressure of the " Civil Disobeyers " at Delhi made his arrest probable, and I regard it as entirely justifiable. As I said before I left Madras, in

the issue between Government and Revolution, *New India* stands by the Government.

—15 March 1922, *New India*

## **THE FRUITS STILL RIPEN**

Non-Cooperation has its fair side, which deceives some foreigners, led away by the sweet words of Mr. Gandhi, and knowing naught of the violence stirred up by him. Of his fatal movement it may be said that "its words are smoother than butter, having war in its heart." When Mr. Gandhi saw its evil fruits, he dropped his civil disobedience programme, and formed one of social reform, to which no one can object. But the fruits still ripen. Its latest, I hope its last work, is the forcing of autocracy on the Central Government, by the refusal of all supplies; and on the Central Provinces, by refusing to form a Ministry; in Bengal it was the largest single party, and also refused to form a Ministry. In the Central Provinces, autocracy has been accepted; in Bengal, the Governor, the Earl of Lytton, took a wiser and bolder course; he pointed out that the Council could not prevent the grants to the departments controlled by the Executive Council, but could withhold them from those controlled by the Ministers, and thus stop all Government grants-in-aid to schools, hospitals, and other useful organizations, so that these would have to close. The Government would go on, but the members could make the people suffer, if they chose. This judicious throwing of responsibility on the right shoulders, has given the Non-Cooperators pause, and it looks as though they would give up their folly. But they have done infinite harm to the

cause of Freedom of India, not only by their denial of liberty of speech and meeting to opponents, and their terrible social tyranny, but by the impression caused in Britain by their unreasonableness and their threats. Let us hope that Britons will be big enough not to refuse Liberty to India because of these, but to realize that the refusal hitherto made, is the direct cause of these follies, just as a similar refusal in Ireland destroyed the Parliamentary Party there and gave birth to the Republican movement and civil war. Let them not repeat that criminal unwisdom in India.

—April 1924, *The Theosophist*

## **HATRED—A CHANNEL OF DARKNESS**

[As leader of The Theosophical Movement, Dr. Besant in 1920 called on its adherents to combat with her this grave menace not only to India's aspirations but to her very spiritual existence.]

This movement for Non-Cooperation is no movement of party politics, to which The Theosophical Society can remain indifferent. It has passed into a phase in which it menaces the very existence of India, her spiritual life, and her spiritual mission to humanity; India, as an original member of the League of Nations, that glorious Herald of the far-off Federation of the World—spoken of, I may remind students, in the book *Man: Whence, How and Whither*; India, as a Free Nation among sister Free Nations in the Indo-British Commonwealth, in the realization of which lies the future peace of the world; India, from whom the light of true spirituality shall shine forth for the illumination of the Nations; India, the great Daughter of

the Rishis and Devas, whose immemorial age stretches back beyond the dawn of history—for history tells us of no time when she was not prosperous and wealthy—the contemporary of Babylon the Great, of ancient Egypt, of Greece and Rome in the days of their glory ; India, sleeping for nigh two centuries, but now awake and on her feet ; this India is now the mark of all the “ Powers of the Darkness of this world,” driven back in the West by the downfall of autocracy in Germany, and now turning their defeated, but still tremendous, energy on India, by whose undoing and hurling into chaos the onward march of the world may yet be checked for centuries to come. These hosts, ever the enemies of the Lords of Light—called Asuras by the Hindus, Ahriman and his agents by the Zoroastrians, Satan and his angels by Hebrews and Christians, Eblis and his armies by the Musalmans—they have caught hold of this movement of Non-Cooperation, *because it is a channel of hatred*, their favourite weapon, and are pushing its leaders onward, step by step, into wilder and wilder methods. The gospel of Tolstoy, so fascinating in its beginnings, but so fatal in its inevitable ending of anarchy, the dragging of all down to the sordid level to which Society had cruelly reduced its producing class, was one of the causes of Bolshevism in Russia. That infection has been brought over here by Tolstoy’s disciple, M. K. Gandhi, with all the fascination of its philosophical side and the deadly implications covered by that philosophy, while the masses have not yet become obedient to the Inner Ruler Immortal, the Hidden God in man. The profound truth of that God hidden in every man makes the great force of the movement ; the ignoring of the truth that God

manifests in His world and works by evolution to prepare men for such manifestation in themselves, is the deadly error which leads to anarchy. Men not yet self-ruled from within, and thus determined to righteousness, must be ruled by Law from without. The destruction of reverence for Law, ingrained in the Hindu religion, the doctrine of "civil disobedience"—the breaking of any law, hitherto obeyed as not against conscience, as a protest against a bad law—was the step which marked the parting of the ways which lead respectively to Freedom and anarchy. It led to the brief madness so cruelly and brutally repressed in the Panjab and, by England's crime in condoning the wicked vengeance inflicted, to the hatred felt against British rule today. Mr. Gandhi at the time saw and confessed the error he had made in forgetting the evil elements in Society. But his penitence was short-lived, and he is now rushing along the downward path. He began comparatively mildly, by a passive withdrawal merely from Government; step by step he went further, and now advocates rebellion of sons against parents while still dependants and minors, and his last panacea, so far, is the celibacy of husbands and wives until India is entirely free. This is obviously madness, and what further devices he may start no one knows.

—November 1920, *The Theosophist*

Because so much lies in the scales of Destiny—no less than the world passing on into peace and happiness, strongly aided by the Indo-British Commonwealth, the model of the World Commonwealth of the future, or the setback of the world for many generations—because of this. . . I call . . . on all students and lovers of Theosophy, the Divine Wisdom, to

range themselves under the banner of ordered and progressive Freedom, and to oppose the threatened anarchy. I have no authority to command—for The Society is democratic in its constitution—and can only call from the Watch-Tower, and warn all who are intuitive of the peril in which we stand. If India, the Mother, fails, then will Bolshevism triumph for the time, and spread red ruin over the world. But I believe that she will not fail, that she will recognize her Dharma and take her place in the World-Order.

—December 1920, *The Theosophist*

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[Alas that in 1921<sup>1</sup> Dr. Besant should have had to declare that "political unrest and excitement, with the revolutionary movement of Mr. Gandhi, have for the moment almost stifled the spiritual life of India."]

## 6. THE WASTAGE OF INDIA'S YOUTH

I am writing in Benares, and we are expecting the invasion of the Destroyers [Mr. Gandhi and the Ali Brothers] to seduce the students of the Hindu University to be false to their duty to their parents and their country. I have given two lectures here to crowded audiences on "Cooperation" and "Non-Cooperation," showing the advantages of the one and the ruin consequent on the other. But the fun of tilting against the Government has captured the immature minds of the youngsters who,

<sup>1</sup> 1921 Theosophical Presidential Address.

innocent of the ruin involved in Mr. Gandhi's subtle proposals, only see the side attractive to all high-spirited youths, of baiting the Government. This same cruel use of youths was made in Bengal against the ill-advised Partition, and resulted in the internment of thousands of students, with the result that Bengal is now in the background void of energy in the political field. The generation that would have been leading Bengal in the van of the propaganda for freedom is broken and dispirited, and there is a gap between the older politicians and the coming politicians, that these should have filled.

—November 1920, *The Theosophist*

## **LEADERS MUST LEAD**

I object to boys being thrown into political conflicts. They may ruin their whole lives in a sudden surge of excitement, and in their manhood bitterly reproach those who took advantage of their inexperience. . . . A boy dismissed from school or college and refused a leaving certificate, has his education ruined and his future livelihood destroyed.

When people unaccustomed to political action suddenly plunge into it, they are apt to think after they act instead of before. Here lies one of the dangers in India's awakening, and that is why I said I fear it has come too soon. Those who are trained in politics, as in my past life I have been—for I have taken a large part in the political struggles of the people in England, and I worked there in difficult times side by side with my old friend, Mr. Charles Bradlaugh—make it, as we made it, one of the rules of political life never to tell another man to go where there was risk, where



we did not go in front ; never to tell a procession to go where there was danger, unless we walked in front, so that we should be the first people on whom blows fell. It was the glory of Charles Bradlaugh, when he lay on his death-bed, that, despite his struggles and difficulties, there was not one home that had been made desolate by him, not one man who had gone to jail for the work that he had asked him to do. The front is the place of the leader ; it is the place of the man, and not the place of the boy.

There is another reason why it is bad to send boys to the front. There can be no wise politics without thought beforehand. People who shout first and think afterwards make a mob, they do not make a political party ; and that is the thing that the boy does. . . . He shouts and protests. It is bad training for the future. In the college, students should discuss political questions, social questions, and economic questions. They should debate them, discuss them, and talk them over in every possible way. We train them to do that in the Central Hindu College. But we do not allow them to protest against the Government. And the reason is a very simple one. When they have discussed these questions beforehand, when they have talked them over, then, when they have gone out into the world, they will be ready to form rational opinions. But if, before they study and understand the questions of the day, they shout out their approval or disapproval out of empty heads, they make a great deal of noise, but noise of no value, like bladders which, when beaten make a noise, but collapse if you prick them with a pin. I do not want India to work along those lines. Train your boys to think first and then to form

opinions, not to call out first and then wonder what they have been shouting for. That is bad moral training. It puts boys on wrong lines, and it takes away that profound sense of responsibility which ought to be at the heart of every one who mingles in political life.

For remember what playing at politics means. Remember that it means playing with property ; it means playing with liberty ; it means playing with the lives of men. Leaders in the political arena have to remember all that, when they take the responsibility of calling men to action.

—Lecture delivered 1910, *The Birth of New India*

Mr. Gandhi has gained his object and has been arrested and interned. He states that he is very comfortable. One may perhaps venture to express a hope that the Government will cancel all the long sentences of simple and of rigorous imprisonment to which the unfortunate lads who have followed him have been condemned by the lower judicial officers. It is not just that the leader should be made comfortable, while the followers—clearly the less culpable—have to endure all the rigours of the law. I have not the smallest wish to diminish his comforts, though I regard him as the most mischievous man in India, since he undermines respect for law, the foundation of civilized Society. But he is sincere, however wrongheaded, and is ready to suffer for that which he believes to be true. . . .

—8 May 1930, *New India*

. . . The Nehru Report, intended to be the last friendly gesture to Great Britain, has been changed into a threat, by the addition of Mr. Gandhi's favourite flourish of Non-Cooperation. This probably ensures its rejection, and turns

the pantomime into a tragedy. As usual, it is the young who are thrown to the lions, the foolish, gallant youths of Bengal. The elders escape, and practise in the High Courts under the oath of allegiance, taken with a mental reservation.

—18 January 1929, *New India*

It is a glorious time for the young men and women today, young folk in the fullness of strength and vigour, gazing open-eyed and fearless at the problems of the day, ready to test their strength in the handling of them. If the youth of India were ready, Home Rule would be ours in a very few years; and they would have been ready, following, as youth should, their seniors and strengthening them, had not Mr. Gandhi come to India, and proved to be, as Gopal Krishna Gokhale prophesied, the worst enemy of political freedom. But even Mr. Gokhale did not foresee how he would demoralize the youth of India, teach them to disobey their parents, revolt against their teachers, desert and despise their natural leaders, and pour out their beautiful enthusiasm and self-sacrifice on the desert sands of hatred and rebellion, instead of on the rich soil of patriotic service, disciplined and guided by those who had brought India to the threshold of Freedom, and would have steered her quickly and safely into the harbour of Home Rule.

—January 1922, *The Theosophist*

## **ANNIE BESANT GUARDED YOUTH**

[During the time that Dr. Besant was in Government disfavour, many students throughout India took it into their heads to demonstrate. On 3 February 1917, she wrote in *New India* :]

As we are evidently facing a period of reaction, it would be well if those who are struggling for Freedom would acquire three qualifications :

a little knowledge of law,  
a good deal of self-control, and  
some common-sense.

The first is necessary in order to know what may be done and what may not ; for instance, people may not stand about in a street and block the traffic ; a street is a thoroughfare, and it is the duty of the police to keep it clear ; if people will not move when asked to do so, they have to be moved. Secondly, people who cannot keep their tempers and who " cheek " the police are a danger to themselves and others ; a good citizen should obey an order, and contest it later if the police officer has exceeded his duty ; in a serious constitutional struggle we do not play into the hands of the autocracy by follies ; this useful lesson I learned from Charles Bradlaugh, at once the bravest and the wisest popular leader I have known. Thirdly, some common-sense is wanted, so as to stand firm in big things and yield in little ones.

I must repeat here what I have repeated at intervals for twenty years, that students ought not to take part in political agitation. College students are permitted to attend lectures, and they should especially attend courses of educative lectures on the questions of the day. . . . But they must not take part in political agitation, in which their want of experience and natural excitability make them—like untrained recruits in an army—dangerous to themselves and others. . . . They must learn to be orderly, to submit to the

useful restrictions imposed on all citizens, and to obey lawful authority. Otherwise, in the difficult times in which we live, they may do irretrievable harm to themselves, inflict the most serious injuries on the cause of constitutional freedom, and merely play into the hands of those who desire to find a justification for coercion and increased repression. Moreover political agitation means, to the young, violent excitement, and this weakens the student for his necessary work. Self-control and study for four years, so as to become worthy to serve the Mother, is not a very serious hardship. A youth who cannot face this will not grow into a strong man.

[When a number of Bengali boys appeared in mourning on account of the partition of Bengal, Dr. Besant as President of the Central Hindu College forbade their demonstrating within the grounds, saying :]

If we are to allow every different part of India to send orders to our boys to take part in political demonstration, then one day we may get an order from Calcutta, another day from Madras, Bombay, or Lahore, bidding our students protest against or demonstrate for some party measure. All discipline would vanish and our institution would become a whirlpool of undigested politics instead of a sober educational training-ground for India's sons. We surround them with an atmosphere of love of country, of duty to their Motherland ; we encourage discussion and debates ; we foster initiative and self-dependence ; but we avoid all sectarian controversies. If we did otherwise, we should get animosity and party feeling instead of harmony and steadiness of growth. Just because we love India truly we dare to oppose our brothers when they want to do that which is unwise. I

say definitely and clearly that the duty of boys is to learn and not to make political protests. It is not their business to protest, but the business of men. Men rightly take part in the politics of their country. The boys have to learn, they must be educated, they must be disciplined. Studentship is the time of obedience. It is against the Hindu Shastras that a student should interfere in the affairs of his country. Moreover, it is not right that the boys' warm hearts should be used by elder people to foment public discontent and to harass Government.

## 7. COMBATING FREEDOM'S WORST ENEMY

Long training, and my intimacy with refugees in England from Continental revolts and revolutionary attempts, safe under the protection of Britain's Union Jack, gave me the experience based on unshakable foundations of principle and method, that I have sought to place at the feet of India since first I touched her shores. . . . Why should anyone be surprised that I oppose conspiracy now as I opposed it in 1915?

I have kept an absolutely steady course since I took active part in political work here, having tried to prepare the way by religious revival, education, and cautious social reform. Since 1876, when I published my first booklet on India, I have had in this matter one aim only in view : to help in winning Home Rule for India by constitutional means, and

have strongly denounced conspiracy whenever it raised its ugly head and brought youths to the scaffold.

I said, at the very time that I was writing and publishing articles in *The Commonwealth* that were used against me, when the Government forfeited my security, that "if conspirators played bombs, Government must play halters". . . . . That phrase was not objected to then . . . . . as I was at the height of popularity. . . . This was the exact equivalent of the words used in speaking of the crowd at Delhi, numbering thousands, who were trying to break into the station, guarded by a little force of some forty men, and who bore the shower of brickbats till all were wounded, and at the point of being overwhelmed, that in such cases, "Brickbats must be answered by bullets." I was very unpopular then, because I was opposing Mr. Gandhi's Non-Cooperation, so that the phrase was caught up and used against me all over India with great effect, disjoined from its context and the circumstances under which it was used. . . . I do not agree with those who think that a huge and aggressive mob is justified in using violence and trying to kill a handful of men guarding a railway station from destruction, but that the handful is not justified in using violence to repel the assault and to save their own lives.

—3 and 4 November 1925, *New India*

[This is] a view that I have held since 1874, when I began to work with Charles Bradlaugh, who abhorred rioting, as the worst danger of a popular movement which stood for liberty and the rights of the people. Having held that view for close upon 50 years, i.e., during the whole of my public life, I see no reason to change it now. All those who care

for freedom share it, though they may not think it expedient to say so in times of popular excitement, for mob violence is freedom's worst enemy, as we have seen when the N.-C.O. movement was strong, and when it deprived all who opposed it of the elementary rights of free speech and free meetings. The tyranny of a Government is hateful, but the tyranny of a mob is far worse, and it is just in the moment of popular excitement, necessarily accompanying any movement for a Nation's Rights, that the lovers of freedom must speak out for the preservation of order, and restrain their followers from every act of violence. Even Mr. Gandhi felt this, after the Delhi, Ahmedabad, and Viramgam rioting, and suspended his law-breaking movement, as he later suspended the Bardoli Civil Disobedience programme, because of the Chauri Chaura horror.

A Government exists to preserve the safety of the citizens ; a violent mob, left to itself, loots, burns, destroys, and murders. At Viramgam, a mob assailed a single official in charge of a custom-house, poured petrol on his clothes and set them on fire. Delhi was under a reign of terror for some days from riotous mobs. Ahmedabad had offices and other houses burnt down, and several men killed. Was all this to be permitted to range unchecked ?

When India has Swarâj, how are her Governments to deal with brickbat-throwing mobs ? Are they to be allowed to kill and maim as they choose, to fire houses, to burn living men to death ? If not, at what stage of brickbat-throwing may bullets make reply ? One of my objections to Mass Disobedience and to plundering mobs, is that they are rearing huge obstacles in the way of the first Home Rule



Government. When the Paris mobs had either guillotined or driven away the French nobility, and had glutted themselves with blood, Napoleon thought that what was wanted was "a whiff of grapeshot." Safety of life, limb, and property is the duty to secure which Governments are made. Without such safety, Society cannot exist. During the time of N.-C.O. power, volunteers molested people in the street who did not wear khaddar, and pulled off their ordinary head-dress. Naturally such people do not like force to be used against them, though they use it freely against others.

While I am in favour of boycotting the British Empire Exhibition, and of a discriminative boycott of British goods, till the Kenya injustice is redressed, I stand by my principle that mobs who attack the soldiers and the police when they are on duty should be met by force, and dispersed with as little violence as may be, but with as much as is necessary. I prefer to guard the lives of peaceable citizens rather than those of rioting roughs, when the choice is forced by the latter, though I admit that the roughs would disapprove.

—13 December 1923, *New India*

## THE BEST REMEDY

While speaking thus, and when I later fought Non-Cooperation because I saw it must lead to violence and bloodshed, I laboured on steadfastly for Home Rule. I shall do the same now. There is no cure for revolutionary movements except Freedom. *But while we continue to work for Freedom, violent conspiracy, which uses bombs and revolvers, must be put down by the strong arm of the law.* Repression is no remedy, but it must hold conspiracy

in check, while the real remedy is being applied. I do not agree with Mr. C. R. Das that fifteen years are needed to educate the people for Swarāj. Only the exercise of Liberty will train them to efficient Self-Government, and I demand it as quickly as possible.

—3 and 4 November 1925, *New India*

## A TEST OF STATESMANSHIP

Clearly, we are at the beginning of a campaign essentially revolutionary in its aim. If there has been no manifestation of violence so far, it must be attributed to an element of good humour with which the Government has treated the long and spectacular march which preceded it. But the first crop of arrests and imprisonments has produced the inevitable sequel in hartals. As the tension increases, the Government will be compelled to resort to measures which will have serious reactions on the country and diminish the stock of the Round Table Conference. It is Lord Irwin's singular good fortune that he still retains the confidence of large sections of the people in both countries. But how far he will continue to enjoy a free hand, in the event of the movement assuming more serious proportions, is a point open to question.

It is most undesirable, in any interests, that the movement for civil disobedience should be allowed to grow. After all, the lesson of taking the law into one's own hands may be quickly learnt—but at a terrible price to the community. Since there will be a Government in this country and, one hopes, a Swarāj administration in the next year or two, the legacy of a movement which challenges authority

wherever it exists is, to say the least, of doubtful utility. But that is of the most trifling consideration in the present circumstances. A revolution is the last thing India can afford, but it is a revolution that is being ushered today—non-violent it may be in the initial stages, and so long as the forces of violence are content to bide their time.

Gandhiji's movement cannot be killed with ridicule—that the Government has already realized. It should not be put down even with "a policy of minimum repression," as the British press is urging Lord Irwin to do, for the simple reason that the minimum will be a factor steadily on the increase. On its side, the Government cannot allow its authority and its laws to be flouted without the impression spreading that it is afraid to take action against certain persons. In the most difficult situation in which the Viceroy finds himself, only the highest statesmanship can prevent India from being plunged into a position which it may take years to retrieve.

—10 April 1930, *New India*

It must be admitted that, in spite of the lawless character of the movement, Mr. Gandhi has been a very powerful influence against violence. Now that his activities have come to a stop, it is possible that the energies of those who believe in active violence may break out with redoubled vigour. If that happens, the effect of it will only be to heap discredit on the movement and extinguish it all the sooner. Assuming that the movement is in due course brought to an end, the practical question remains as to what steps the Government should take in order to give once again a constructive turn to the course of Indian

politics. It is worse than futile to imagine that events that have happened as a result of the Congress resolution of December last may be treated as of no particular significance. The extent of the Civil Disobedience movement is a measure of the deep distrust with which the actions of the British Government are viewed by the Indian people, and of the intensity of their discontent with the present system of Government. Whatever the Government proposes to do, if it is to be of any use at all, must be of such a nature as to reinspire confidence in them and win them to support the new Constitution. The best of Constitutions cannot last without the support and cooperation of those concerned in its working. It is, therefore, the duty of the Government to consider at this juncture the best possible means of conciliating and pacifying the Nation. . . .

—8 May 1930, *New India*

## **CIVILIAN COMMITTEES OF LAW & ORDER**

. . . Either a man really believes in Non-Cooperation, or he does not. If he does, it seems to us, his duty is to educate the country in the matter of Non-Cooperation, to make sure that it will be non-violent, and ceaselessly to press it forward. . . .

It is impossible to conceive of any legitimate reason for professed leaders of political opinion in this country refraining from expressing their views in this matter. We are acquainted with the absurd suggestion that the business of a leader is to find out what the country is going to do before he commits himself, but even that extraordinary idea of leadership does not cover the case of a politician who

advocates Non-Cooperation where it is convenient for him to do so, and ignores the issue otherwise.

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It is unfortunate that very many do not believe in the seriousness of the outbreaks, and consequently merely look on sullenly. I feel sure that if they realized the reality of the danger, they would rally round the Government, for though wrongful repression has deeply angered the educated classes, they would, if they believed that there was danger to the British connection, rally round the Government almost to a man. At least in all districts where there is no disturbance, Government might go out of its way to show trust and confidence in the people, and it might also, in such districts, shut its eyes a little to overharsh criticism of its actions. Where there is violence of a serious kind, Government must meet it sternly ; the more reason to be wisely gentle, where there are no signs of rioting.

All over India, however, there should be quiet preparation for the possibility of disorder, so that at the first sign thereof it may be checked. I have therefore suggested the formation of Committees of Public Order, that might carry out some or all of the following suggestions :

1. To organize bands of young men ready to help in maintaining order, wherever and whenever necessary.
2. To contradict alarming rumours and exaggerated statements, likely to cause panic.
3. To spread the idea of the responsibility of each citizen for the preservation of the public peace.
4. To hold classes for the reading and explanation of news, showing the dangers of lawlessness, as exemplified in

the conditions prevailing in Russia and Central Europe, in consequence of the Bolshevik propaganda.

5. To advocate cooperation with the Government in the preserving of peace, the checking of panic, the avoidance of all friction between the different classes and creeds of the community, and the promotion of friendly feeling among them.

6. To report promptly to the proper authority any case of harshness, oppression, or unnecessary roughness, on the part of soldiers, police, or subordinate officers, so as to prevent popular irritation and resentment, and to give to the people the sense of security arising from the presence of trusted citizens, ready to listen to complaints and to redress wrongs in an orderly way.

It is probable, that the Committees may never be actually called upon to help in the preservation of order, but they can do much towards preventing friction and quieting the public mind. Moreover, their very existence will have a tranquillizing effect. It is better to prevent violence, than to put it down when it has actually occurred. Besides, the King's Government has a right to expect that all good citizens—however much they may object to its present form—will rally round it when its very existence is challenged, just as the educated classes sprang forward to defend it when the War broke out in 1914. That generous impulse, so spontaneous and so cordial, was chilled by rebuff, and the effect of that repulse has not yet passed away from the hearts then wounded. But strong and firm, below all passing angers and resentments, is the loyalty of the educated classes to the union with Great Britain. It is the greatest asset of the Empire, its surest support, and the worst crime

of the Anglo-Indian press and of the anti-Indian propaganda in Britain, is the flouting of the English-educated class, the doubts cast on their fidelity, the slurs recklessly flung at them. The desertion of the educated Indians would sound the knell of the British Empire.

—May 1919, *The Theosophist*

## IS THERE A WAY OUT?

Every one who objects to Non-Cooperation is asked, not unnaturally, "What do you propose to do?" If, as many of us believe, the path of Non-Cooperation leads straight to a precipice, there is reason enough for objecting to it, *per se*, in that falling over a precipice is fatal. I submit that Non-Cooperation, in aim and in method, is revolutionary, for it aims at overthrowing the Government, and its method is by the force of numbers, thus "bringing it to its knees." A Government ceases to exist *qua* Government, whether you seize its members, imprison or execute them, or deprive them of all power by paralyzing them, so that they cannot function. The object is the same: to compel the Government to submit by depriving it of the exercise of its powers. It will be admitted, I presume, that both Jihad and Sinn Fein are revolutionary. Non-Cooperation is said by Muslims to be "a form of Jihad." *Young India*, in an editorial note, said that the difference between Sinn Fein and Non-Cooperation was that the former used violence and the latter did not. It would therefore seem that, by the statements of its leaders, Non-Cooperation is essentially revolutionary.

I do not deny that a Nation is justified in overthrowing a Government, when its yoke becomes intolerable. All free

Nations admit this right, and all of them have, at some stage of their history, exercised it. The question thus becomes : "Is the British yoke so intolerable that it should be broken by revolution?" This is the bedrock of difference between the Neo-Nationalists, and the pre-1918 Congress-Nationalists; both aim at making India a Free Nation, but the second use reforms as their means, while the first in their acceptance of Non-Cooperation, use revolution. Every one who seeks for India Self-Government as a Free Nation within the Empire, is a Nationalist in the real meaning of the word, and I have always denied the claim of the Extremists to monopolize it. But practically the second consists of Moderates, Liberals, and National Home Rule Leaguers, while the first comprehends the "Congress Party," the Extremists, and apparently the All-India Home Rule Leaguers.

Is the British yoke so intolerable as to justify revolution, whether by force of arms or by Non-Cooperation? I deny it. The Local Government in the Panjab, with Sir Michael O'Dwyer at its head, was intolerable, and the atrocities under Martial Law were intolerable. No words can be too strong in their denunciation, and the supineness of the Central Government in carrying out the directions of the Imperial Government is most blameworthy, the penalties imposed on General Dyer are inadequate, and the defence of him in the House of Lords adds one more to its many sins against Justice and Liberty. But against these, we must put the rule over the rest of India during these troublous times. Bombay may well be cited against the Panjab, Sir George Lloyd against Sir Michael O'Dwyer. The wounds of Bengal have been largely healed by the Royal Amnesty,



and its use in the Panjab has given her back the political leaders of whom Sir Michael O'Dwyer had deprived her. A few years ago newspapers were destroyed for a tithe of the freedom which they now exercise unchallenged, and men were imprisoned for far less than is said unhindered on many a platform today. I do not think that most people recognize the immense change of spirit which has come over the administration; their minds are so full of the Panjab cruelties that they do not see the present enlarged area of liberty, and in their righteous indignation with the malefactors of 1919, they do not recognize the honest efforts of the Governments of 1920. The continuance of Panjab misrule and its spread over India would have justified revolution; the change in the Panjab and the large changes in India would make revolution a crime.

I say "would have justified revolution," but must add, "if possible and beneficial." As things are, revolution would mean anarchy, and would result in a new foreign ruler infinitely worse than the old. For India has no Army, no Navy. She cannot defend her own frontiers, and, reduced to anarchy, with no government and no discipline, she would fall an easy prey to any armed Nation. Britain has sinned against India in holding back substantial reforms for so long, in narrowing them too much even when given, and, above all, in not fulfilling the ruler's first duty of protection by the condign punishment of those who, in the words of the Secretary of State's despatch, treated those who had the right to look to them for protection as though they were enemies. These are great sins and they have—it is idle to blink the fact—estranged the Nation, and made many look

with half-approval on suggestions of ending the British connection. But Britain has also great virtues, and Co-operation with her will bring India more swiftly to fully responsible government than any other line of action.

Let us look facts in the face. India is weak, because divided ; helpless, because unarmed. Non-Cooperation is a big gamble, with anarchy as one stake and utter futility as the other. It must fail, because counsels are opposed. What is the use of banging the table and saying that no honest Indian *must* enter the Councils, when candidates are thronging to every constituency ? It is futile to say without power or authority : “ You *must*, ” when candidates reply : “ We won’t. ” Orators cannot prevent them from going to the polls ; they can abuse them, but abuse has been so overdone that it now falls flat.

### *The Shortest Way to Home Rule*

What then is the way out ? I fear there is only one sure way, for even resolutions, protests, meetings, will soon be overborne by the pressing interest of the elections. None the less, they should not be despised, for all we have gained so far has been the result of these now-condemned methods of constitutional agitation, and even now the Central Government is being pushed by it into action, inadequate though that action be. There is only one way, because others are barred. , Revolution by violence is inexpedient and impossible. Revolution by non-violence, Non-Cooperation, leads either to anarchy or futility. What is left ? Working to get our very best men into the Councils. Sending up from every Council a resolution demanding

justice on the offending officials of the Panjab and for compensation to their victims, with the annulment of all sentences and refund of all fines; a resolution demanding the repeal of all emergency legislation in connection with disturbances, including sedition and treason in speech: the passing of a Bill abolishing the sex disqualification for the political franchise, so as to enlist the great force of Indian womanhood for the public benefit; the using of every power for improving the condition of the masses, by local self-government, education, improvements in agriculture, industries, and the like. The first resolution will be for the healing of the past, the second for the guarding of the future. The legislation will be for the uplift of the masses for the removal of the poverty which is strangling India to death.

To the impatient, this way may be less attractive than the direct struggle for immediate redress, but it is sure, it is within our power, it means the political education of the people, the winning of Liberty, the guarding of it when won. For Liberty is not safe under a statute, but under the spirit of the Nation. It may not win rapid redress of the Panjab atrocities, but it will make their repetition for ever impossible. It is the manly way of a virile Nation, conscious of its strength, but also conscious of its present limitations, and it is the shortest road to HOME RULE.

—*The Citizen*, April 1920, quoted in *Gandhian Non-Cooperation or Shall India Commit Suicide?* (1921)

## II. PURNA SWARAJ—

## WORLD ISOLATION

### *LOYAL TO TRUTH*

THE National Congress in its Madras Session passed a resolution that the goal of the Congress is Independence, and we are told that this is binding on every loyal Congressman. Moreover, we are also told that this is the “immediate goal”—a perfectly illegitimate addition to the resolution. Independence Leagues are being formed, and people join them light-heartedly, making no difference in their daily life to suit their new angle of vision. Lawyers, who have taken the oath of allegiance—without which they cannot practise in the King’s Courts—break their oath, and yet go on practising as though an oath more or less were of no importance. Members of Legislative Councils, who have also taken the oath of allegiance, join an Independence League, and yet remain in the Councils. And so on and on.

I have never myself held any office, entry into which entails the taking of the oath of allegiance, but I feel that as I accept the protection of the law, I am bound to give allegiance to the Sovereign of the Realm. If this be disloyalty to the Congress, I regret it, but the fault lies with

the Congress resolution, not with me. I do not feel bound by Congress resolutions when I do not agree with them. The Congress is supposed to be a National, not a party, organization, and in the days when it was filled by delegates from all the political parties who accepted its Creed, this freedom was recognized. The officers of the Congress were chosen from the majority party, and the minority party accepted their authority for the year, but kept its liberty of opinion, and its right to organize on its own lines. No self-respecting person can permit a majority to silence his opinions, and to control his expression of them within the limits imposed by morality and good manners.

The Congress, unfortunately, is no longer a National but is a party organization. Those who attend it are no longer delegates, but become members by paying annas four and being accepted by one of the small local oligarchies, not for their usefulness to the Nation but for their subservience to it. The local Committee here over and over again announces a meeting in the morning, gives the names of speakers without their permission—I was lately announced to speak in favour of an Independence League!—and begins its meeting when enough people have drifted together to form one. The arrangements are farcical, and drag the very name of the Congress in the mud. A radical change in the present Constitution is necessary, a return to the conditions before the present one was made. The old name is kept ; but the old spirit is gone. This was shown by the calling of the All-Parties Conference to form a Constitution, a work which should have been done by the Congress, and not by an outside body, really representing the Nation.

Meanwhile, let us possess our souls in patience and work for better days. Loyalty to the Nation and to long-held convictions at present supersedes loyalty to the Congress. When the Congress was really National, it did not demand uniformity of opinion and the sacrifice of convictions ; it was great. I am frankly against Independence proclamations which are unreal and are not carried out in life. If it be disloyalty to the Congress not to pretend to hold a policy I do not try to carry out, well I must be disloyal to the Congress and loyal to Truth.

—25 October 1928, *New India*

## TO FREE MEN A FREE NATION

Liberty is a great celestial Goddess, strong, beneficent, and austere, and she can never descend upon a nation by the shouting of crowds, nor by arguments of unbridled passion, nor by the hatred of class against class. Liberty will never descend upon earth in outer matters until she has first descended into the hearts of men, and until the higher spirit which is free has dominated the lower nature, the nature of passions and strong desires, and the will to hold for oneself and to trample upon others. You can only have a free nation when you have free men to build it out of—free men and women both ; but no man is free and no woman is free who is under the dominance of appetite, or vice, or drunkenness, or any form of evil which he is unable to control. Self-control is the foundation on which alone freedom can be built. Without that you have anarchy, not freedom ; and every increase of the present anarchy is paid for by the price of happiness, which is given in exchange.

But when Freedom comes, she will come down to a nation in which every man and every woman will have learned self-control and self-mastery; and then, and then only, out of such men who are free, out of such women who are free, strong, righteous, ruling their own nature and training it to the noblest ends—of such only can you build up political freedom, which is the result of the freedom of the individual, and not the outcome of the warring passions of men.

—1909, *The Changing World*

## **FACE FACTS!**

What about India? India can only become independent by a conspiracy—which would be betrayed—to enter into treaties with Asiatic Nations to support an armed insurrection. Is the “left wing” of the Congress prepared to enter into such a conspiracy? I think not, but if not, why pass resolutions for the immediate Independence of which they now talk? The Independence or the subjection of a Nation is not one of the minor questions in politics. It is very much the major. I stand for Dominion Status because it makes India independent within her own territory, gives her control of the Army and of her (potential) Navy. Then she can take Independence whenever she wishes to have it.

In the absence of this, the cry for “immediate Independence” and the public formation of Independence Leagues is the preparation for either a non-violent or a violent insurrection. The first has been tried by Gandhiji and has failed. Who is to lead the second? The gallant lads of Bengal have tried it, and India left them to be hanged. Independence

Leagues are perfectly safe, for they are not serious. They are merely "bluff."

—13 November 1928, *New India*

Work actively for the preservation of the link between India and Britain. The immense importance of this link must be evident to every person of intelligence and foresight. It preserves peace between Asia and Europe; it stands as a barrier against the breaking out of war between the two continents, a war which would mean a conflict of coloured and white Humanity, probably accompanied by the destruction alike of Asiatic and European civilizations, to be followed by a new Dark Age period. The folly of the verbal Declaration of the Independence of India—without a navy to defend her coasts, and without an army trained to obedience to only coloured officers! Boys, inevitably without experience and therefore without foresight, shout for Independence, and at the first opportunity show their fitness for Freedom by breaking up a meeting which does not echo their own crude ideas, forgetful that intolerance shews their incapacity to assimilate the first condition of Freedom—Free Thought and Free Speech for all. It speaks ill for their parents and teachers that they have not taught them broadmindedness and courtesy.

—March 1930, *The Theosophist*

Let us make no threats which we cannot carry out. Do not let us talk of "leaving the Empire," without knowing how we propose to leave it, and what elements of leaving it are in our hands. I desire intensely that Great Britain and India should remain united, for neither can perform her full mission to the world without the other. A Commonwealth



of Free Nations, coloured and white, knit by love and mutual service, that is my Ideal, passionately loved and perseveringly worked for. But I do not deny India's right to leave the Empire, nor her moral justification for doing so, under the humiliations inflicted on her by the present Government of Britain. But has she the power to leave the Empire? It would be easy to stir up a few riots, to murder a few people; but what then? Then fleets, blockading the coasts; aeroplanes raining bombs on the towns; invasions of Northern India by Afghans, Pathans, and frontier tribes; murdering and looting; Japanese invading Southern India, in alliance with Britain; India, unarmed, helpless, with no powers of resistance, no unity of purpose, reduced to submission and enslaved. Unless we are prepared to face this, threats are unmanly, undignified, absurd. People who make threats should face facts.

India's Freedom is very near, if we will work, instead of bluffing. Along the path of the first Party,<sup>1</sup> Dominion Status will be reached in a few years, or even sooner. Then shall there be peace between coloured and white peoples; they shall cease to be rivals and shall become complementary; there shall be amity, mutual trust, mutual service. The world shall benefit by their comradeship, and advance through their strength; peace shall be ensured, and science and religion shall clasp hands. Is not this a goal worthy of both Nations? Shall not our decision be to walk along the Path which leads to it?

—1923, *A Retrospect and a Decision*

<sup>1</sup> Advanced Liberals and National Home Rule Leaguers.

... I submit that India, independent and alone, will recommence the old story of invasions and subjections, and must at once begin to prepare for these by increasing her huge military expenditure in preparation for the near withdrawal not only of British troops, but of the great protection of Britain's mighty name. As part of a great Commonwealth, the strength of the whole Commonwealth is her defence. As she rushed to the defence of Britain, overmatched in Europe, so would the Nations of the Commonwealth rush to hers, if she were attacked from outside. Britain's navy is still the largest in the world, and that navy will be a sister-guardian of her long coast-line, even after she has created a navy of her own. All the strength of the Commonwealth will be at the call of every Nation in it, and that knowledge is sufficient to protect. In mere numbers, China is the only country that matches the Commonwealth, and in organization, in effectiveness for self-defence, there is no comparison between the two.

Nor can we leave out of account, in thinking of an independent India, the fact that one-third of her area is occupied by Indian States, which, with the cessation of the British Overlordship, would become independent kingdoms, as of yore. Many of them have well-trained troops and full treasuries. In a Home-Ruled India, these States would be autonomous units, and it may be that the Council of Princes might form a part of the Parliament of India. But in an Independent India, a desire to remove their neighbour's landmarks would probably arise, and the New India might have to defend her freedom against the aggressiveness of the armed major States, while she was still incapable of armed defence.

... If India were independent, the Muslim part of the population—for the ignorant masses would follow those who appealed to them in the name of their Prophet—would become an immediate peril to India's Freedom. Allying themselves with Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Persia, Iraq, Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt, and with such of the tribes of Central Asia who are Musalmans, they would rise to place India under the rule of Islam—those in (now) "British India" being helped by the Muslim Indian States—and would establish Musalman rule. . . . In thinking of an Independent India, the menace of Muhammadan rule has to be considered.

### *India and Japan*

To break the British connection would mean not Freedom but only a change of masters, for Japan is armed cap à pie, her population is overcrowded and needs an outlet; India at present cannot defend herself alone, and Japan would seize the hour of her weakness. To declare Independence now would be madness, and Britain would not be foolish enough to protect, while Independent India was preparing for future self-defence. She would either clear out at once, and leave India to be overrun, or would try to hold her down by force, while encouraging dissensions among her people, to the ultimate ruin of both great countries.

—1922, *The Future of Indian Politics*

India and Britain together can preserve the Peace of the World, and lead it into a higher civilization. Separated, Britain will become a small Power, and India will be overrun by the Afghans, the Asian Central tribes, and finally by the

Russian Communists, aided in India itself by the party of violence among the Musalmans. . . .

—April 1932, *The Theosophist*

## SEPARATION MEANS DECAY

The one vital matter for India is to concentrate every energy on winning Swarāj—Full Dominion Status, equal in all respects with the other Dominions. To this she should consecrate herself, shaping her own Constitution, demanding its acceptance by the British Parliament, and never relaxing her efforts until they are crowned with success. It may be a long and stubborn fight, but victory is sure, if India be true to herself, and her victory is the necessary condition of the stability of her connection with Britain. She will never again be at rest, she would be false to her Past and to her Future if she ever were at rest, until she is Mistress in her own household, Ruler in her own land.

Mr. Baldwin spoke the other day of cooperation between all who regarded the union between Britain and India as indissoluble. Whether it be indissoluble or not depends more on Britain than on India. If Britain insists on India remaining a subject Nation as she is today, then that union will inevitably be dissolved, sooner or later. No foreign rule in any Nation can be permanent. A tie based on the principle of equality, woven out of the threads of love, of mutual service, of mutual helpfulness, such a tie would probably last for centuries. But a leash against which one of the pair is constantly struggling, which is felt as an insult to self-respect and human honour, which makes men and women inferior to foreigners in the country in which they

were born, which causes their Nationals to be denied citizenship in any other country, because they submit to its denial in their own—such a bond has in it no element of permanence. Therefore, we, whether English or Indian, who believe that these countries have been brought together for the good of the world, who believe that apart they will decay, while together they will renew their youth and mount up to heights hitherto undreamed of, we must, by all we hold sacred, by our belief in God and by our duty to Humanity, work unweariedly, hope unchangeably, till Hope has become Realization, and India and Britain clasp hands in loving friendship, and enter the New Era side by side.

—17 November 1925, *New India*

## OUR MARTYR YOUTHS “

[Speaking of a crusade organized and engineered by revolutionary elements in the West to destroy Britain, Dr. Besant said :]

It is luring some youths to their own destruction by its specious pretences ; for their sakes, above all other reasons, I would see the conspiracy crushed. Its leaders, safe in Moscow and in Berlin, will laugh at the ease with which they are exploiting the Indian longing for Freedom, ready to sacrifice everything for National Liberty. They keep out of the danger zone, as Krishnavarma did, when he played the same wicked game with young lives that would have been the ornaments of a Free country and the glory of their Motherland. The Bengali lads are of the material of which heroes and martyrs are made, eager, enthusiastic,

passionately eager to sacrifice themselves to a great ideal. Were it not that I know that those who exploit them are more to be pitied than their victims, I could almost hate their destroyers. But knowers of the Good Law dare not hate ; the greater the guilt of the wrong-doer, the greater also his need for compassion.

— 14 November 1925, *New India*

## ***IN THE NAME OF LOVE***

If more evidence were needed of the fact that he [Mr. Gandhi] is becoming more and more the tool of the Powers of Darkness, it is provided by his new policy of breaking the connection between India and Great Britain, on which depend the future peace and liberty of the world. The linking of Europe and Asia in mutual love and service, the blending of the Ideals of East and West, the spiritualizing of the world by India, the building of a mighty Indo-British Commonwealth of Free Nations, the model of the yet distant Federation of the World—all this is now at stake and will be decided by the issue of the present struggle. Defeated in Europe, the Dark Forces are making here their last stand, and over against our great movement of Reform, leading peacefully to Home Rule by the cooperation of India and Great Britain, they have started this propaganda of Hate, of growing violence, which, if successful, will tear asunder East and West, Asia and Europe, India and Britain, and wither the fair hopes of peace, amity, and mutual helpfulness and service. Hate can only destroy, it cannot construct ; and as the old craftsmen had their Mark, which they placed on their work, so is Hate the Mark of the foes of humanity.

The flood of destructive human passions is set free by Hate, and rushes on its devastating way. Let every member of The Theosophical Society in India set himself to the task of stemming this flood, in the Name of the Lord of Love.

—November 1920, *The Adyar Bulletin*

Let me close on a note . . . which cannot be sounded too often. Some Indians would say that I, as an Englishwoman, ought not to speak on Indian national education. . . But ill do they read the signs of the times who rashly strive to rend apart and to set in hostile camps the Asian and European branches of the great Aryan Race. . . The English have still much to teach the Indian ; the Indian has also much to teach the English. From India will come the spiritualization of all religions, the profoundest ideas of Deity, the most philosophical conception of the solidarity of mankind, the deepest science of psychology, the saving of the world from the nightmare of industrialism, the lifting of human life to nobler dignity. From England will come the practical sciences that yoke the forces of Nature to the service of man, the energy and accuracy which turn commerce into an art, the imperial power of organization, and the genius for applying principles to practice. Let the twain unite for the world's redemption, rather than destroy each other to the world's undoing. For the hope of the future lies in the twinship of these Nations, and they who would tear them apart are the enemies of mankind.

—23 February 1908, *Education as the Basis of National Life*

### III. DISUNITY—

## THE MENACE OF DIVISION

### THE UNIFIER

*"I have always felt that one of Mrs. Besant's greatest powers is her capacity to enter in a peculiarly intimate and understanding relationship with all with whom she comes into touch. With each one of us she has a relationship exclusively to ourselves. It is, of course, her wonderful power of adaptability, the power which gives her knowledge how to guide each individual along his own pathway—helping him to climb his own ladder, and not urging him, as do the ignorant, to jump down from his own ladder to climb another."*

—George S. Arundale, 25 June 1918, *New India*

In the past separateness was right. . . . Separation is the mark of descent into matter, and unification is the mark of the ascent to Spirit. The world is on the upward trend, although thousands of souls may lag behind. The ideal now is for peace, cooperation, protection, brotherhood and helpfulness. The essence of sin now lies in separateness.

—1899, *Dharma*

Can Islam unlearn the aggressive spirit and learn tolerance—the splendid tolerance of Akbar? That is the religious problem which faces India today, for only if she can establish



religious peace can India be politically strong. Can The Theosophical Society in India become the peacemaker? There are two atrocious wars which threaten the world with devastation—the war between the white and coloured races, which the white policy of Britain and her Dominions and the United States are stimulating, and the religious war between Christianity and Islam.

—October 1923, *The Theosophist*

## **WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF ONE FATHER**

My purpose is the drawing together of Musalmans and Hindus, for India can never become a nation until Hindus, Zoroastrians, Christians, and Musalmans understand each other. Shall we not all put aside theological hatreds and feel as brothers? Shall not the Musalman cease to mutter “Giaour,” and the Hindu cease to whisper “Mlechchha,” and the Christian cease to say “Heathen”? Shall we not learn to respect each other’s faith, and reverence each other’s worship? There is no need for conversion from one religion to another; each is a Ray of the Sun of Truth. We must all return to the home whence we came, and we may well live with our minds at peace in the land in which we must physically dwell side by side. None need give up aught that is dear to him that has been handed down by generations of his ancestors, that is the centre round which cluster the sanctities of home. Each should not only love his faith, but also live it, and realize that his neighbour’s faith is as precious to his neighbour as his own is precious to himself. Let us learn from our neighbours instead of quarrelling with them, love them instead of hating,

respect them instead of scorning. It is written : " All shall return to God." It is written : " All shall perish save His Face." Call Him Allah, call Him Jehovah, call Him Ahura-mazda, call Him Ishvara—names are many, but He is One. We see the Sun from different places, but He stands the same unchanging Light in Heaven, shining on all alike. We are all children of one Father ; why should we quarrel on the journey home ?

—1917, *The Birth of New India*

## HINDU AND MUSALMAN

In the writings of the great Doctors of Islam, the same splendid metaphysic is found which is the glory of the Vedanta, and here lies one of the reasons for union between Hindus and Musalmans in modern India. Islam and Hinduism can meet each other, and clasp hands in brotherly friendship on this high ground of philosophy and metaphysic, common to both, Musalman Doctors and Hindu Acharyas standing side by side. And here may I say a word of gentle reproach to my brothers of Islam?—" This metaphysic is yours, but it is of value for the world ; why do you not translate it for the benefit of India and of the West ? " . . . By the translation of these words, a point of union, then, would be found between Musalmans and Hindus, and they would find themselves at one in philosophy and metaphysic, while differing in rites. And secondly, such translations would vindicate Islam in the eyes of the world, as translations of the Acharyas have vindicated Hinduism. Europe will recognize and honour the Muhammadan learning of the

East, and we shall hear no more of the reproach that Islam favours ignorance.

—1917, *The Birth of New India*

There is no difference for us between Hindu and Musalman. Both are Indians, both come from the womb of the Mother.

—16 November 1917, *New India*

Let the old antagonisms die. Let your country be the greater for the religious differences. Let the common welfare of the nation be the care of every religion. Let each religious community train its own children in its own faith, and not try to get at the children of other religions and make them apostates in the home of their fathers and mothers. Only thus can you have religious peace and religious respect. Do not let your ship of nationality be shipwrecked on the rocks of religious hatred and religious suspicion. Learn mutual respect. Learn that each has something to learn from the religions of the rest of mankind; from Buddhism learn that heart of love and infinite compassion which is the great characteristic of the Law of the Buddha; from Christianity learn that spirit of self-sacrifice which is the great mark of Jesus, the Christ; from Hinduism learn that note of Law, of Order, incorporate in that untranslatable word, Dharma; from Zoroastrianism learn that spotless purity of thought and word and action, which is the distinguishing mark of Zoroastrianism; from Islam learn that realization of the Unity of God, which is the insistent message of that faith. Why quarrel? Each faith has its own characteristic. Make all these characteristics part of your own . . . nation. . . . Why should religious differences keep you from uniting for national ends? Let the

energy of the West wedded to the wisdom of the East help you in this great common task. . .

—1901, "The Simpler Life" in *The Birth of New India*

## **"FORGETTING THE THINGS THAT ARE BEHIND . . ."**

In India, Theosophy alone can weld together Hindu and Musalman, Parsi and Christian, Jain and Sikh and Hebrew, and knit them all in bonds of loving friendship with their younger brethren of the West. Let us all seek by mutual love and mutual respect, to understand and sympathize with each other, never harbouring suspicions of evil motives in our minds, never allowing harsh or contemptuous phrases to escape our lips. In these days of crisis and of growth towards self-government in India, let every Theosophist be a centre of peace and goodwill ; let the Englishman trust the Indian, the Indian trust the Englishman ; " forgetting the things that are behind, let us reach forward to the things that are before," and work together for the happier age that is dawning, the age of equal citizenship, of the abolition of differences between races and colours, an abolition now existing only in The Theosophical Society, but which is to spread from it over the whole of India. Over the storms of the time, let the White Dove of the Wisdom hover, emblem of knowledge and of love.

—1909, *Theosophical Presidential Address*

## **HOW TO WIN LIBERTY**

There are only two ways of a nation winning liberty : by physical violence or by Reforms won by the strength of the

people and the use of all the powers that they have. Between these two ways, you have to choose today. It was openly said in the Congress—if it had only been said in the Subjects Committee, I should not repeat it—that we are at war with the Government. Think over that and see whether you are prepared to take up that position, whether you are ready to enter on such a titanic struggle, whether you have a reasonable chance of winning, before you plunge into it when it will be too late to draw back. Measure your strength, reckon up your resources, notice the divisions among your own people, and do not simply say: “We must be united because India is not united at the present time.” If Brahmanas and Non-Brahmanas cannot live together in Madras in peace, how can you expect a united Nation? If these small differences between people of one religion cannot be got over, how are we to weld the Nation into an irresistible unity which no power would be able to withstand? It is no longer playing with politics and taking politics as employment for leisure hours. Politics is now beginning to be a wholetime work, claiming the cleverest brains of the country and the bravest hearts. For myself, I believe that India is able to win Home Rule, strong enough to do it, ready to do it, if it is only possible to hold this great movement in check, so that we could turn to ways of swift Reform instead of turning aside into the supposed non-violent inaction which would inevitably break into violence. If it is possible thus to win Home Rule, it will be by working strenuously along the lines of Co-operation.

—19 October 1920, *New India*

One of the valuable points is shown in the first of these joint addresses, that is, the four great political bodies unite in a single lot, inspired by a single hope and moved by a single will. In unity will lie the coming of our freedom, and on that unity the final victory depends. . . . We do not want absolute identity of opinion on every detail; we want identity of object and variety of method, all . . . animated by one desire, the liberty of the Motherland. Their methods may be—ought to be—different as they may appeal to different temperaments, and to different types of mind. Variety is part of perfection, provided the variety blends in a single movement, for then variety gives richness and colour, and in richness and colour lies the beauty of nature. Not identity of opinion then, but identity of aspiration, not a single body but many bodies moving with a common purpose—that is the perfection of the national organization, and it implies independence of thought and vitality on which the character of a nation depends.

—16 April 1918, *New India*

## A YEAR OF TRUCE!

Now, the particular work I want to begin at once here, which I had been already doing, is to try to win the heads of the various political Parties in India to join together and work together for that which we all desire—Dominion Home Rule for India. I had a long conversation, I may say to you, with Mr. Gandhi yesterday morning, and we discussed the position and some of the methods by which there was a possibility of a general union being brought about. He was the only one of the big leaders whom I could see in

Bombay about this union. He will thoroughly cooperate in the endeavour to bring about unity right through India among those who take part in political work. As that is a great difficulty in our way, division among parties, if we can only bring about union, then our battle will be very, very largely won. But I begin by asking you, all of you individuals, not to say harsh or unkind things against people who may not agree with you in all your opinions, but who are in favour of Home Rule for India. We want to attain in India a year of truce between parties, of peace in which active work may be carried on by all, and there is not one among you who cannot do something to create that atmosphere of peace by being peace-makers in your own particular circles, remembering that India is greater than any party, that the Freedom of India matters more than the individual opinion of any of us. We ought to be ready to sacrifice prejudice, though not principles, in working for that supreme object of making India what she ought to be, a Free Nation, a work in which all of you are cooperating with myself; for there is one work for all of us, and you must try to bring about at least a year of peace during which that one object may be carried on in cooperation with all of us.

—1 September 1924, *New India*

## **SERVING THE COMMON MOTHER**

*[From Dr. Besant's Reply to Addresses on her Jubilee Celebrations]*

In speaking of India in England, without thinking I spoke naturally of what we want, of what we demand, of what we are determined to have. I was rather struck when

newspapers complained and asked how as an English woman I spoke as though an Indian. What is one single body in the long procession of bodies that all of us have worn, and that which is wrought by many lives into the bodies that endure—that is the Motherland, and to me that is India. When one wants to serve, and as I found in England that our great difficulty was the multiplicity of parties over here, it seems to me that the obvious thing today is to try to get rid of the opposition and make the common union shine out, the common demand for India's place among the Nations, and not to quarrel over trivialities and refuse to walk together because the path may have here and there a rut. We are all going in the same direction, we are seeking the same goal, we are all pledged to the common Mother, and to make her Queen in her own household, and all her children to find a place therein. . . .

You would hardly believe that the first paper that I read every day in England was the *Morning Post* and I learnt a lot from it. It gave the largest amount of news about India and I wanted to see how they put it. I found that they had a number of assassinations and all kinds of things so that you think of India as though seething with fury. But I sometimes reminded them that Indians, including amongst them Hindus and Musalmans, have been able to live in the country and prosper for a thousand years, and that it is not likely that they were going to very, very seriously disagree except as brothers disagreed and quarrelled, and that they make friends again. The whole thing is so exaggerated there, and they see India as if it were a constant mass of assassinations and rioting. And yet if you compare the two



populations, there are more murders and assassinations in England in comparison with its population, than there are in India with the hundreds of millions of our people. We want to win their understanding. We want to be very firm and steady, but not provocative in asserting our claim. We should every one of us remember that it is not worthy of our Motherland if in grave and serious questions on which the future not only of India but all other countries as well will depend, we cannot argue quietly, perseveringly, with self-control, and with gentle words. For who shall dare to touch the Chair where India sits with hands unclean, so that they may soil the radiance of her purity ?

—4 September 1924, *New India*

## LET US WORK WITH YOU!

*[Regarding a campaign of hatred against the English—  
Dr. Besant said :]*

Surely it cannot be well to circulate fabrications of this kind. To what end can they bring us ? And what purpose can they serve ? . . . It means, if successful, the stirring up of strife, the rending of India, the explosion of war. I ask you why the English should not work with their Indian brothers ? Why page after page in an important Review—admirably conducted save for its wild hatred of the English—should be filled with incitement to strife ? Why should every Englishman who has tried to serve India be insulted, forgetting that in the changes which have made modern India, English and Indian have worked hand in hand. Is there any reason for this suspicion and this hatred ? There is a justification, and that we, who wear English bodies, should never forget under

any insult. . . . There was so much of evil and of wrong, so much of treacherous betrayal and barbarous treatment in the past, that Indians may well suspect and hate. . . . When I see suspicions rise, and read words of hatred. . . . I say to myself : " Alas ! the memory of wrong still remains, and the only way to root it out is the way of loving service, of quiet acceptance of now wrongful suspicion, until hatred is worn out by love." " Hatred ceaseth not by hatred at any time ; hatred ceaseth by love." And will not you, my Indian brothers, allow the few of us in English bodies, who have given to the Motherland our love, our work, and our devotion, who have for her sake forsaken the country of our birth and the friends we have left behind, will you not allow us to pour out our love at India's feet, and to give the service we count it honour and privilege to render ? Will you not let us make amends for the wrongs of the past ? We will bear the karma of our country ; we will bear the suspicion ; we will bear the hatred ; and we will pay you back only in love and service. Even if at the bottom of your hearts you do not trust us, even if you wrongly think that we have some ulterior motive, some personal aim, yet, for the sake of India's future, for the sake of the children of the future, who should work hand in hand and not in ever-perpetuated hatred and mutual wrong, forgive us what is wrong in the past of our countrymen, take us as willing offerings to make amends for the wrong. Do not drive us away until you have others to replace us ; but let us work in love and harmony, and let us help you towards that Self-Government, which can only come by English and Indians working hand in hand for the coming future and the Motherland, to make the

common tie which shall bind these countries into one for evermore.

—December 1909, Theosophical Convention Address

If England and India will join hands and work together for the common good, if they will forget their mutual prejudices and hatreds; if they will cease to entertain the foolish suspicion which makes them mutually distrustful; if both will find means to solve the race and colour problems as we have solved it here in the Central Hindu College—and we have solved it, for here we know no race, no colour, only amount of service and usefulness—if the Empire will deign to see it can be done, as in us, the humblest and youngest of her children, then England and India together will rise to a future greater, grander, mightier than the past of any Empire that has wielded far-spread power. For they are the younger and elder brothers of the same Imperial Aryan family, and together they will be omnipotent, though the world should rise against them in arms.

But if their union be broken, then both will have their day.

—1911, Central Hindu College

## ONE UNITED PRAYER

[At the close of the Special Congress, 31 August 1918, Mrs. Besant was received with shouts of “Bande Mataram” and applause.]

### *Be United!*

I am called on not to speak on the details of a scheme that you all can read but to wind up a discussion which has placed before you the main points of that which we have

striven to accomplish... In the battle into which we are now entering, after placing the essentials of our Congress-League scheme within the framework of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, I would like to remind you that we are like an army with a strenuous campaign before it, advancing against well-disciplined and serried hosts. For the success of such an army unity is absolutely necessary. Now, in every army, you have your artillery, your cavalry, and your infantry. But their place is different, and they must be co-ordinated if they are to succeed in the struggle. If your cavalry charge ahead, brilliantly galloping on the foe without the preparation of the artillery, without the support of the infantry, what will happen? The enemy will meet them in a charge, will find them unsupported, will mow them down, separated from the main body of the hosts and then, having annihilated the cavalry, it would advance across the ground left to annihilate the infantry in its train. If we are called impatient idealists, if we are cavalry, we cannot win the battle by ourselves. We must have the infantry, that is, those who cannot gallop on horse but who have to walk with their particular work, and I say we must wait for the infantry, we must be ready to accommodate our pace to theirs, and when their main body has fought the battle, then we may charge as rapidly as we can and turn the victory into a complete routing of the enemy.

I submit that the divisions made so much of, the controversies that stir the country, are nothing more than a manifestation of political life and political thought. (Hear, hear.) You had much more unity in the days gone by. Why? Because the masses were not thinking, because the young

took no interest in politics, because a few voiced the aspirations of the Nation, and there was no difference because of the absence of thought. Now that you have much thought, now that you are forming your own opinion, now that you are preparing yourself for Self-Government, you must have differences, because you are alive. If you are asleep, if you are paralyzed, then you have a blank unity everywhere. But if you have diversity you should not quarrel with the manifestation of life. What we say is, those who do not go wholly with us, form your own organizations. In England, they have radical leagues, liberal leagues, conservative leagues, and so on. But they all meet in Parliament. Have your Moderate Association, have your Home Rule Leagues, have as many separate organizations as you want, but join in the Parliament of the Nation and let that united wisdom of the Nation guide the deliberations of us all. . . .

I plead to you in uniting with your brethren of the Muslim League—in the whole of this proposition, there is only one slight matter on which they disagree with us—I ask you Hindus and Muslims of the Congress and men of the League to join in a common cry. One is the Motherland, one is the Nation, and can we not say, lifting our united voice? :

“ O Bharata Mata, Mighty, Divine, and Glorious : We are making your country fit for You to dwell in and we ask You to listen to our aspirations and to dwell practically in our midst.”

—3 September 1918, *New India*

## THE YOGA OF UNIFICATION

“Do good to those who hate you.” Now, why should you? That is a question which is very often asked. One day I was talking with a man who was not religious, and when I quoted that precept to him, his retort was: “Why should I? Why should I do good to a man who does harm to me? Shall I not encourage him to do it another time?” He was not willing to take it as a statement of the Great Teachers in the world. He demanded a reason for obedience. Now the reason is profoundly simple, although it is not so very often given. Let me remind you that you are made up of Spirit and matter. . . . Suppose, then, you have a feeling of anger. That feeling of anger in you will assert itself in the matter connected with you by violent vibrations. Those vibrations in you tend to stir up in the body of any person with whom you meet similar vibrations; and so you have two sets of similar vibrations increasing each other as they strike against each other continually. . . .

How is that to be put an end to when two people meet, so that one angry person may not provoke another, and bring about a violent quarrel? By the second person setting up the opposite emotion, which will be accompanied by a series of vibrations exactly contrary to the vibrations of anger, and so will tend gradually to soothe them instead of intensifying them. . . . You can silence the vibrations of anger in another by sending against him a current of goodwill. Now there is the simple scientific explanation of the moral precept. The Great Teacher said: “Return good for evil”; but He was expressing in that a fundamental law in Nature: that you can only stop evil by the opposite

good, and not by meeting it with a thing of its own nature, a repetition of itself. . . . It is the right way to meet any wrong emotion in another. In the case of the man I spoke of, the moment I told him that as a scientific fact, he accepted it. It appealed to reason, by showing him the natural facts underlying the moral law. And to know that that is a law, to know that this influence we have upon each other is an influence we can use for good or evil, that we can extinguish anger or intensify it, and that on us lies the responsibility when we meet those who do not know how to rule their emotions, of supplying the emotion which will hinder the bad and strengthen the good; this is one of the valuable facts in the Science of Morality that every one should know, first taking the statement, and then experimenting with it, and finding out that the law works, as laws of Nature always work, invariably and changelessly.

—1912, *A Sketch of Theosophy*

If you want to know with absolute certainty that thought makes character—try. And the way of trying is very simple, and proves the law to be true in a very short time. I say that, because modern people are always in a hurry. But remember that no first-hand knowledge can be gained without patience and effort. Suppose you want to find out whether by thought you can add or take anything from your character—selfishness, or any other weakness; let us take as an example that you are irritable; this is not a crime, but a very common and ordinary weakness. You recognize that you are very easily made irritable. Having recognized it, never think of it again; because, if thought builds character,

thinking about a weakness will put more life into it and make it grow ; thought on your irritability would make you more irritable, and strengthen the undesirable characteristic. Instead of thinking about irritability you will think about the opposite quality—patience. Think about patience for some minutes every morning ; not once, and then forgetting it for three or four days, and then doing it again. Irregularity undoes what you have done, and you will be only marking time. . . . You must do it regularly, for this is a scientific experiment. Every morning, then, you will think for five minutes about patience. Think in any way you like ; vary the thinking ; for it does not matter much what you think, provided you think about it.

—1912, *The Law of Action and Reaction*

You meditate in different ways according to your ingenuity in planning them. One favourite way of mine—for I was very irritable in my younger days . . . was making myself an embodiment of patience ; you never saw such a saint as I was in my meditation ; whatever I might have been outside of it during the day, I was absolutely, completely, and perfectly patient in it ! Then I brought up round me mentally all the most unpleasant and provoking people that I knew, and I heightened their power of provocation as much as I increased my own power of patience ; and so I made a little mental drama, in which they provoked me in every possible way, and I answered as a modern Griselda. After a time, when I met the people, I found that their power of provocation had gone. “ Why did I think that person so annoying ? ” I would wonder. I found that, unconsciously and gradually,



I had established patience as a permanent part of my character. Any one of you can do it.

—1913, *Man's Life in This and Other Worlds*

Repeat that, with whatever variations you like, every morning for a week. Then you will find that the thought of patience comes up in your mind without being summoned in the course of the day. That is the first sign that your morning thought is working. You have made in your mind the tendency to think patience. At first it will come up after a little outburst of irritability; the morning thought asserts itself and you think: "Oh! I ought to have been patient." Go on still, until *with* the provocation comes the thought of patience, and there is an effort to be patient. Go on still, until the thought of patience comes *before* provocation, and the provocation glances off from the mental habit of patience. Still go on, until you will find at the end of a few months (the time will depend on the force of your thought) that you have established patience as a part of your character, and you no longer feel the least irritability under the small provocations of life. I know that this is true because I have done it. I was naturally irritable, but am now a very patient person. Try it for yourselves, and when you have proved the law you will have a feeling of certainty, you will know that it is true that thought makes character. In that way we can go on, eliminating weakness after weakness, until each is replaced by the corresponding strength. You can definitely build up character. . . .

And if you will try that simple experiment, and, remembering the importance of the question, be willing to sacrifice to it

five minutes a day for a few months, you will find that you have that power; then, as far as character is concerned, you have become the master who knows how to make it, and your success is only a matter of time and of resolute effort. Is not this enormously better than going on all your life sighing: "Oh! I wish I were good!" and yet going on every day doing the same stupid wrong things? There is no other sure way. The power of thought is the power of creation. God made the worlds by His divine thought. We build our own little worlds by our human thought. There is no other creative power in the universe.

—1912, *The Law of Action and Reaction*

If you want to succeed, it means steady persistent thought along one line. A mason who is going to build a house does not put a brick here one day, another there another day, somewhere else the next day, and then in somebody else's garden the following day, and across the road some other day. Why, if he did that it would be a long time before he got his house built! That is what you are doing with your character. Today you are trying to be truthful, tomorrow patient, and the next day sympathetic, and so on, and you wonder why you never get any result at all, and you mean so well, too—you are trying to be "good." Give up the trying. Concentrate and practise in thought on one thing at a time, and thus build in the qualities, and then you will make progress, and the goodness will be inevitable as progress is made.

—1908, *Australian Lectures*

## **DIVINE FORGIVENESS**

*[After Dr. Besant's internment, when many of her friends felt bitterness on her behalf.]*

I would ask you, if I may, that in this struggle the unkindness and the unfairness shall be left to our opponents, that we shall not answer evil with evil but we shall follow that example . . . of Sri Ramachandra who forgot a thousand injuries in the evening but never forgot one act of love which had been laid at his feet in life. And so, let us worship the Mother, bring to her pure hearts and loving hands ; let us ignore what is said of mischief, of unfairness, and let us remember that those who fight for liberty may not soil their weapons, because her enemies may fight with weapons that are not clean.

We, for the moment, have won in the great struggle. Then the old Indian chivalry demands that we shall not strike a foe who has been struck down in the combat. Let us remember that we are Indians and therefore we must follow the Indian tradition. The old Rajput chivalry, which could fight gallantly while fight was necessary, could give a hand to raise a fallen enemy the very moment the strife was over.

—September 1917, *New India*

## **LET THE INDIAN NATION BE BORN !**

The Indian Nation of the future must combine into one coherent and organized body, men of various faiths and men of various races, who in the past have been bitter enemies, and have striven against each other for many generations. Hindus and Musalmans, Parsis and Christians—to say nothing of such well-marked inter-Hindu creeds as Jains and Sikhs—

have to be welded into a Nation, and this, not by mergence of all the varying beliefs into one, which is impossible, but by the Theosophical recognition of the spiritual unity of all religions, and the broadminded tolerance and mutual respect which grow out of this recognition. The warring races have to be welded into a Nation by turning the memories of strife into memories of common pride.

A Common Religion must ever be the strongest bond of union among the Hindus as a community, and in order to make Hinduism a strong bond and not a disintegrating force, we must lay stress on what is ancient and universal, and ignore what is modern and local. The *Sanatana Dharma Series* will aid Hinduism as a unifying force, for it contains all that Hindus universally accept and leaves out sectarian beliefs.

A Common Religion is not possible for India, but a recognition of a common basis for all religions, and the growth of a liberal, tolerant spirit in religious matters, are possible. . . . Nor need religious differences in India check the building of an Indian nation, if men of all creeds will sink their religious hatreds, and recognize that the God they all worship is the God of Humanity and not a tribal or national Deity.

### ***A National Language***

But while a common religion is impossible, a common language and a common literature are possible. . . .

A Common Language is a bond of union, and Samskrit and English serve as common languages between Hindus of North and South, of East and West. The Hindus of the

North and South chant the Mantras in Samskrit, and discuss business and public questions in English. Therefore Samskrit should be taught in every English Department, and English in every Patashala.

Among the various vernaculars that are spoken in different parts of India there is one that stands out strongly from the rest, as that which is most widely known. It is Hindi. . . . In addition to the boy's own vernacular, he should always learn Hindi, for that is the most widely spread vernacular of the country, and one can go from one end of the land to the other and talk in Hindi to all, save the most illiterate people in every part of it. . . . In the North it is the vernacular of a great part of the people and a large additional part, who do not speak Hindi, speak languages so closely allied to it that Hindi is acquired without difficulty. Urdu is but Persianized Hindi; Panjabi and Gurumukhi are dialects of Hindi; Gujerati and Marathi are again dialects of Hindi; Bengali is softer and more poetical Hindi. It is true that when we travel South, we come to languages derived from a Dravidian source and not from Samskrit, and here a real difficulty arises. But the South of India cannot afford to be cut off from the North, and the knowledge of Samskrit in the South will make easy of acquirement its derivative Hindi, whereas Tamil and Telugu can never become universal in India. The learning of Hindi is a sacrifice that Southern India might well make to the unification of the Indian Nation. Then Samskrit will bind Hindus together in religion, English in Imperial and official concerns, and Hindi in social and family life. . . . For the Muhammadan, Arabic will take the place of Samskrit, but English is as necessary to him as

to the Hindu, and Hindi is his Urdu, stripped of Persian derivatives and written in a different script.

A Common Literature is another bond of union, and this all Hindus have in the Shruti, the Smriti, the Puranas, the Itihasas, the Philosophies, and their Commentaries, and the Drama . . . In literature the Muhammadan can as heartily enjoy Hindu masterpieces as the Hindu can delight in those born of Islam. Both belong to the Indian Nation, and form its common literature.

Geography has a determining influence on nationality, for two nations cannot co-exist on the same soil. A nation must have its national territory, and we cannot have a Hindu nation and a Musalman nation in India; we must have one Indian Nation from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from Bengal to Kathiawar. Now such a Nation has never yet existed, and "India" always has been, and still is, a mere geographical expression. Old India was divided into many States large and small, and though occasionally in ancient days, an Emperor would be recognized and all the Kings become his Feudatories, such an Emperor ruled by force of his own great personality, and no one Empire endured and passed from Ruler to Ruler for generations. Hence India is yet to be made a living reality, an organized entity, and you, the students of today with tens of thousands of your like throughout the land, you are to be the builders of India, and from your hands she will emerge—a Nation. . . .

How shall the Indian Nation be born? By Sentiment also. A feeling is beginning to pervade her races that India is the Motherland, and the Indian Nation is already a Dream, an Ideal. She exists already in the world of Ideas; she will pass, she

is passing, into the world of discussion ; and thence she will be born into the world of Facts. This is the Law. This is the Path : First 'the Idea, then the Popularization, then the Fact.

How shall we smooth the path for her coming feet ? We must make the history of India a common history, looking on all her great men as a common glory, on all her heroes as a common heritage. Hindus must learn to be proud of Akbar, Musalmans of Shivaji. . . .

It may be said : " But if this is so, why not educate together the boys of different faiths, why have a Hindu College at Benares, a Muslim College at Aligarh ? " Because, such separate education is the best for building a religious and moral character, and such characters, once moulded, will live together in peace and mutual respect in manhood. During the plastic years of boyhood it is best to mould and shape the character after its own type, to make the Musalman boy a good Musalman, the Hindu boy a good Hindu. When they are firm in their respective religions, they can mix together as men, and gain, not lose, by the contact. Only they must be taught a broad and liberal tolerance as well as an enlightened love "for their own religion, so that each may remain Hindu or Musalman, but both be Indians.

Just as stones are shaped and fitted, and then built into their respective places in an edifice, so must these boys be shaped and fitted by their several religions to be built into the Indian Nation. Let us, then, hold up as an Ideal the Indian Motherland, the Indian Nation ; let us popularize the Idea, till the heart of each Province throbs in unison ; then let her descend into the world of Facts ; let the Indian Nation be born !—*The Birth of New India* (1917)

## IV. THE GANGRENE OF LETHARGY AND APATHY

### **WHAT IS WANTED**

HOW long have I been urging upon you to take this matter of education into your own hands, and not leave it for others to guide and plan. . . . What is wanted is not Government help. It is your work. What is wanted is self-devotion, energy, initiative, the willingness to go through years of drudgery, for only in that way can true education be built up. This has not yet been acted on. The idea, when spoken about anywhere, causes a good deal of cheering, but only in a few places has there been any real earnest work, even in starting an Indian school. . . . Protests are necessary, but they should be followed by action, for thought that is not followed by action acts like a gangrene in the human mind. Better remain silent, better not even think, if you are not prepared to act ; . . . for in the higher spheres, as you know, thought produces action ; down here, the thought, and especially talk, without action, does not get a nation very far along the line of progress. So all the energy flows out in the talk, and nothing is done. . . . In the matter of education, why not begin to act ?

—Lecture delivered 1910, *The Birth of New India*



Even a crime is less injurious to the soul than a continued brooding over it in the mind, the growing of a cancer at the heart of life. An action once done is dead, and the suffering that follows it teaches the needed lesson, but thought is generative and living. . . .

—1899, *Dharma*

## TO INDIA'S LEADERS

We hear talk of apathy in India. But there is an apathy far more dangerous than that of the people generally, and it is the apathy of those who have been appointed to help and guide India. . . . The apathy of those who know, and who have been entrusted with service which demands the most constant alertness, is infinitely more dangerous than the apathy of those who do not really know, even though many of them think they know. The apathy of those who know destroys. The apathy of the ignorant is but an obstacle in the way.

What answer can you expect to your call for unity, if there be absence of unity among yourselves—among you who know? Will you not try to remember that . . . the more you lavish upon the common need, the greater is your claim upon the Higher Ones, and They well know how to be lavish towards those who know how to spend of their own substance in the service of others. The more intensely you strive for the Freedom of others, for the Freedom of the world, the sooner will you yourselves be numbered among the Free. You enter your own larger Self as you serve the larger Self. . . . Is there apathy in you? Is there apathy in those movements which should lead the way in enthusiasm and

delighted absorption in the Great Cause they exist to serve? What comes first with you? Even if the smaller, the individual, must still dominate, shall it not dominate less, shall not the larger loom larger?

Brotherhood among yourselves—true, unclouded Brotherhood, is the need, the imperative need, today. And for this, each one of you is individually responsible. You must establish and maintain Brotherhood in your own immediate surroundings, in every movement to which you belong. You must do this, at whatever cost to yourselves. Where you are, there must Brotherhood be. Dissension, quarrel, dispute, misunderstanding—of these must you be rabidly intolerant. You must be impatient of them, ruthless in crushing them. It is of no importance that you may not succeed. It is supremely important that you make ceaseless effort. If you are never dismayed, never despairing, never hopeless, never discouraged, success is yours. Challenge yourselves . . . as to your membership of any Association or Society which exists to promote Brotherhood. Do you bring disruption or virility? Be utterly frank and true. Is there aught of disruption? Have you not then a share of the responsibility for it? Have you not contributed to it? Have you fought it with all your power? Have you been, above all, a harmonizing influence, a strong, unbreakable link in an otherwise crumbling chain? Have you ever shown a spirit of sweet reasonableness and ever-willing accommodation? Have you always given way, save in matters of vital principle, and even as regards these, have you maintained gently, respectfully, in a spirit of true comradeship? Change if there be need for change. Do not hesitate. But maintain Brotherhood within.

Brotherhood without depends upon Brotherhood within. There would be little Brotherhood but for the Great Brotherhood. India and the world shall not know Brotherhood save as there is Brotherhood in movements dedicated to Brotherhood. Unbrotherliness in the heart means disruption in the body.

—13 December 1928, *New India*

## **AWAKE TO SERVICE !**

Awake to the need for Service ; strengthen yourself for the helping of your fellows ; and then your eyes shall be opened and you shall find the Master beside you. . . . So few people are really in earnest. So few people, when they see a thing they want, have strength enough to will, so that they shall gain it. You wish for it ? Yes, you wish for it now, and when you go out, you will wish for something else. That kind of wish will take you nowhere. You think of attaining a beautiful Ideal. Yes, it is a beautiful Ideal, but an Ideal will not transform you into its own image unless it is assimilated and reproduced. A strong will is what you want. The flickering wishes that pass across the mind, the flickering thoughts that dance in the brain, these can never take any human being anywhere. If you cannot live that life, if you do not become a little better than you were, it is because you have not learnt to think in the way that can create whatever you choose. You have not learnt that. And so you must strengthen your thought-power and your will-power. And you must desire well. For ripe thought and ripe desire—these are the two wings by which you may fly upwards, and reach the goal you see ; and no book will

help you, no words will inspire you, no thinker, no orator, can uplift you, unless you have in you the will of steel and the brain of creative thought. Then only, by thought and by will, you may realize that to which you aspire.

—1912, *The Ideals of Theosophy*

## SEIZE THE GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY!

If the present Constitution is “inherently weak . . . and cannot last long” (quoting Dr. Sapru)—being only meant for a transition period—there is every reason why those who favour constitutional progress should work for it, and prevent a revolution. If these things be so, why not expect an advance in the near future? There comes the weakness of the educated Indian; he lacks self-confidence; he does not trust himself. He has magnificent courage, but it is the courage of endurance more than of action, the courage of the martyr rather than that of the victor. Is it not that he forgets the cardinal doctrine, “God in us,” or “God with us,” according to the form of the creed? “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,” said the Apostle of the Gentiles, one of a few who faced a hostile world, the result being in the cry of Julian: “Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!” “Where Krishna and the son of Pandu are, there is Victory,” cries the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Divine Power in the human instrument. “I have you now,” said the armed enemy, threatening the Holy Prophet as he sat alone unarmed. “Nay, there is a third,” said He tranquilly. “Who?” cried the startled foe. “God,” quoth the Prophet, and the sword fell harmless to the ground. This was the faith of Cromwell, when he gathered his

Ironsides, and in the event, executed a King; the faith of Washington, when his farmers faced the armed might of Britain and founded a Republic. This is the faith we need now in our Indian leaders, leaders in the noblest battle the world has seen, to restore India to freedom, to re-establish the greatness that lived through fifty centuries, and gave to the world unrivalled riches of spirituality, of intellect, of morality, and of physical wealth.

All the powers which make for righteousness are on India's side today in her battle for liberty, for freedom of self-expression, for the saving of the culture of Asia of which she is the highest exponent, for the lifting of the world to a higher civilization than that which is passing away. Unless she step forward now in advance, the death of the present civilization will mean anarchy, for only India can give the lead to the new. Gandhi has this faith and therefore this courage, and, alone, he made a huge movement, but unallied with wisdom it has only led him to the gaol and the movement to divisions and failure. The moment is now propitious and the forces of the Nation can be led to victory by men like Sapru, like Sastri, like Govindaraghaviah, like C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, like T. Rangachariar, like Gokaranath Misra, like the Ministers of Bombay, U.P. and Bihar, reinforced by the younger men like Jamnadas Dwarkadas and those who work with him, like crowds of men and women outside the Legislatures, eager to be led, ready to follow. Will not all these, and many more I might name, seize the golden opportunity given thus by the Conference, and start from Delhi—where the Congress made, in 1918, the failure which has led to all our troubles—a movement

which, from the basis of the highest constitutionalism, will give India Dominion Status in the Commonwealth, Home Rule, Swarâj, within her own borders, that she may lead in building the New Civilization and permeate it with her ancient wisdom, her splendid culture? She has been the crucified among Nations, the despised and rejected of the Younger Nations, the scorned of the West. What shall her resurrection be but life to the world?

—20 January 1923, *New India*

Events hurry so swiftly forward that unless we can keep pace with them, they seem to flash past us, as a motor-car flashes by a bullock wagon. Yet, if we would take part in the building of the New Age, and strengthen the hands of the Hierarchy in Their mighty work, we must labour in co-operation with Them, however small may be our share in the execution of the Divine Plan, as labourers who fill their appointed places under the direction of Master Builders.

—March 1923, *The Theosophist*

## V. DE-SPIRITUALIZATION— DE-NATIONALIZATION

WHEN Mme. H. P. Blavatsky and Col. H. S. Olcott, the earthly founders of The Theosophical Society, first set foot on Indian soil, what was the condition of India and of Hinduism? Scepticism and materialism had eaten out the life of the nation. The crowds of the so-called English-educated class were followers of Huxley, Mill, and Spencer, and had entirely forgotten their own literature; were contemptuous of the past and hence hopeless for the future; they were copying English ways, English manners, filling their houses with English furniture to the destruction of Indian arts and crafts. They had lost all national spirit.

De-spiritualization had brought about national degeneracy. There was no activity of national life, no pulsing of the national heart. Read the papers of the day and judge for yourselves. Even when I came to India [in 1893] Indians told me that India was dead; they smiled sadly at my statement that India was not dead, but sleeping. She is not sleeping today.

—December 1909, Lecture, Theosophical Convention

**BE INDIAN !**

The entire Indian Nation must be built up by the encouragement of national feeling, by maintaining the traditional dress, ways of living, and so on, by promoting Indian arts and manufactures, by giving preference to Indian products over foreign. Now this is a point which really goes to the very root of Indian revival. Do not undervalue the importance of sentiment, and do not try to do away with everything which differentiates India from other lands ; rather strive to maintain the immemorial customs and follow the immemorial traditions, instead of trying to look as little Hindu as possible, as many of you are inclined to do. It is true, of course, that these are outside matters, but they have a very real effect on the generation and maintenance of national feeling. Take clothing and habits of life. There is no question that the Indian dress is the most suitable for the climate ; it is healthy, it is beautiful ; why then give it up ? . . . If Englishmen out here were wise they would adopt the Indian dress, instead of which we have Indians adopting the English dress at a possible risk to health. . . . The Indian dress is suited to the Indian climate, not only because it is light, but also because its material can go through water daily, and so is far more suitable to a hot country than the cloth coat and trousers which are worn unwashed over and over again. . . . The experience of thousands of years has shown . . . the best kind of dress for India. But it is not only that. The inner feeling and outer expression often go together, and he who westernizes his outside attire is very likely to grow western *inside* as well, and therefore instead of strengthening he really tends to weaken his Motherland. . . . Men should



lead a national, a simple, life with all the noble characteristics of the ancient times ; . . . their houses should have the old simplicity and not be crowded over with a multiplicity of things of foreign manufacture. . . .

We must press upon wealthy men that instead of sending to England to buy costly furniture, they should spend their money at home in encouraging the arts which are around them in their Motherland, "so that a public opinion may be formed which would cry "shame" upon a Prince or Rajah who filled his palace with foreign articles, instead of having them produced in his own country, so that his wealth should add to the comfort and happiness of the people and strengthen the national prosperity. These would awaken a sense of nationality, filtering down from the higher to the lower, regenerating the nation, and striking its roots deep down into the physical lives of the people, uniting all India, binding all India together closer and closer and closer, till her oneness is realized, till Indians recognize in themselves a people.

—1895, *The Means of India's Regeneration*

I hope, having come to make my home in this Holy Land, to try to show you, to whom I belong by faith and by duty, as time goes on, the lines of practical reform which are needed if our India is to be saved . . . I hope, in concert with some of your most religious and pious men . . . to give . . . that spiritual life for the lack of which we are falling, and for the lack of which the world itself is crying out. I know the old countries. I have lived there. I know how they are suffering, and the causes that have led them to their present state. I know the misery, the poverty, and the

degradation. I know the wretchedness and the struggle. I went there to learn it, and I have learned lesson by lesson. For what? I went there and was born there to learn—in order that by experience gathered by my brain that I am using now I might learn what civilization might teach. I learnt that misery and struggle are in Western lands, that I might gather together the knowledge I could in a form available for use, and then come back to my own race and people, and give them a warning that, alas! they would not listen to, if it did not come through a tongue and from a brain trained in the midst of a civilization that it denounces and in the midst of the miseries that it knows. For they cannot blind me with the glitter of their civilization, and they cannot dazzle my eyes with the glory of their outer appearance. I have been underneath, to the slums and misery; I know its folly; I have lived in it. I know its wealth. I know its luxury, and everything for which you are yearning and which is dazzling the younger amongst you today. I come back to you and say that this thing is a sham and that it is a delusion, it means degradation and not rising; it means spiritual death and not life . . . I ask you to take me as your helper; for the life which came from India is given back to India for service, and I sacrifice it to the helping of our race.

—1895, *Eastern Castes and Western Classes*

Now I have two or three words to say to you which I know some may think perhaps going too far. I find it continually said that you must preserve the British character of your administration. I ask you why? You are

not Britons. You are Indians. If you are Indians, your administration should be an Indian administration. Why so much care about the British character of it, when in your difference with England lies your real value to the Commonwealth. Like the phrase "blessings of British Rule," the words "British character" hypnotize the people. There is a method of making people helpless while they are really free. I could take some of you and by a few passes of my hand I could make you think that you could not move your arm or leg. And because you thought it so, you would become incapable of moving. That is what is done to you by your education. You are hypnotized into the belief of your unfitness, into the belief that you must be guided by another Nation instead of being the Nation that you are from your immemorial past. Therefore, I say to you, think what do you want and not so much about the British character of this, that, or the other service. Claim your rights as men and the freedom of your own country. What is it that you want today for India? Surely you want to make it fit for men and women to live in it? It is not so fit today. . . . It is not human to be in the condition that you are. . . . I ask you to remember your dignity, your self-respect, your determination to be free. In this scheme, you are opening a door to liberty through which you will walk in the few years that lie in front. It is not enough to have food, though you have little of it. It is not enough to have clothing and shelter. Without freedom, you are not men. Without liberty, you are unworthy of your country. I ask you to prepare this beginning of a new life of a new era for India and to pitch your hopes high and to pitch your

aspirations high. For, it was said that if you aim at a star, then your arrow will travel far.

—3 September 1918, *New India*

As your thought spreads in Europe and the sublimity of the ancient teaching becomes more and more known ; as in the centres of western intelligence and western learning the names of the Rishis of antiquity become household words, and men repeat their sayings as crystallizing the noblest human thought ; as this is happening, the eyes of the West are turning more and more to the India of today, and they are asking, " What will be given us by those men who boast themselves the descendants of the Rishis ? Shall we find in India a nobler religion ? Shall we find in India a loftier spirituality ? Shall we find in India a purer ethic and a greater morality ? Is modern India worthy of ancient India and are the men in whose physical veins runs the blood of the Rishis fit representatives of those mighty Beings ? Do they show the Rishis' thought, the Rishis' devotion, the Rishis' spirituality, the Rishis' superiority to the transient joys of the earth ? " What answer does modern India give to the question that is now coming from the West with ever-increasing force ? What answer in life, in literature, in religion, is to be sent back to the questioners in western lands ? Are they, when they come here with their minds full of noble ideas learnt out of ancient books, are they to be greeted with a copy of their own civilization and a secondhand repetition of the words, of the thoughts, and of the manners, with which they have been wearied in the West ? If so, they will return disillusioned.

from this ancient country and declare that, while it may be great to be the physical descendants of the Rishis, it would be greater to be the sons of Their mind, of Their thought, of Their life, Their devotion, and Their spirituality, and set the old example to the world instead of merely copying the phases of modern civilization.

—February 1900, *The Theosophist*

In the matter of education, why not begin to act? You know you send your boys still by thousands and thousands to missionary schools, and it is a disgrace—not to the missionaries, for they are doing work which they honestly think to be to the glory of God and for the good of all men; they believe that their religion is much better than yours, and I am bound to say that they love it better, because they work for it much harder, as a rule. You ought to remember that your religion is the oldest of all living religions and the most perfect in its range and in its details. Surely, it is not for you to take the children, whose bodies you have given, and robbing them of their birthright, put them into other hands and mould them in an anti-Indian fashion. The missionaries do not make many Christians. . . . But I tell you what they do. They dig up the roots of devotion and religion in the plastic soil of the boy's heart. They wither them with ridicule, they trample them down with sarcasm, and when the boy grows up, he grows up an unbeliever in all religions, a bad Hindu, and not a Christian—a kind of hybrid, who is of no use to his country. When you de-spiritualize an Indian, you de-nationalize him. Why does that go on? Because you do not care. . . .

What is the essence of a National movement? Not blind antagonism to the foreigner—that is only the excess of reaction—but the determination to make your own national characteristics the leading features of your civilization, and only to accept from the foreign civilization that which can enrich your own without injuring it. . . . The English . . . do not de-nationalize themselves. They take what is good and valuable from every nation with whom they come into close contact, but they remain English still. And so should you do. . . . Take from other nations whatever of value they have to give you; learn their science, for that is their special contribution just now to the thought of the world; profit by their discoveries; utilize what they really have of value in their scientific thought. But . . . let your coinage, as it were, your mental coinage, bear the imprint of your own Nation and not the imprint of the foreigner. Let it enrich, do not let it debase your coinage. Give it your own spirit and your own colour. . . . Enrich your civilization as much as you will by infusing into it the gold, only the real gold, from foreign countries, but let it remain eastern . . . still. Do not debase, but only enrich; do not de-nationalize, only increase the circle of your national thought. Then the contact will be useful and not death-bringing; then you will be better for the teaching of it, and not the worse, not corrupted but the purer for the contact.

—1901, "The Simpler Life," *The Birth of New India*

## **WHICH SHALL INDIA CHOOSE ?**

It is the ideal that makes the politics and not the politics the ideal. . . . There are two great ideals one over against the other, either of which a Nation may choose. One of these is material wealth and increase of physical wants, and the gratification of those wants ever more and more ; and the other is the knowledge of the intellect, is the wealth of wisdom, is the growth of art, is the cultivation of beauty, is the realizing of man's higher nature. Art, science and intellect become the handmaids of the Spirit, so that the ideal is spiritual and not material, enduring and not transitory.

Which shall India choose ? There is the point . . . to which the whole of my thought has been directed. On the one side material advancement, on the other side spiritual growth ; India between them, looking longingly towards the material wealth and the material luxury, but held back by an instinct that comes from the Spirit within her, that that is not the road to perfection, that that is not worthy of India's choice. . . . If you choose the material ideal you choose strife, struggle, poverty, dissatisfaction, unrest and final death ; whereas if you choose the spiritual you choose a peace that is ever growing, power that is ever increasing, strength that knows no diminution, and immortality of life. Which do you choose ? . . .

I, who love India as my own, for she is mine, India with whom all my hopes of the future and my memories of the past are bound up, this India that is so great and yet so little, so mighty and yet so poor,—I claim from the children that come from the womb of India that there shall be some worthy of the past, that there shall be some worthy of their Mother, that there shall be some who shall give her what she

asks : thought, philosophy, literature, science, the great things that she loves, and not merely the struggles of parties and the questions that divide politicians. Some of the better brains should do this work, some of the abler tongues should preach it. I have told you the place for the politician, but some place is needed for the teacher and some for the thinker. I plead to the young among you, who have not yet chosen their path in life, whose hearts are still soft, and whose hopes are still pure. Turn aside from the struggles of the bar, turn aside from the examinations of the colleges, turn aside from the hopes of civil service, and the employment that is paid for with gold ; give yourselves to the Motherland, give yourselves to her help, give yourselves to her redemption. . . . Will you not give to the future what the past has given to you ? Will you not hand on to the generations to come some addition to the treasures that the generations of the past have bequeathed to you ?

There are so many Nations that are political, so many Nations that are wealthy, so many Nations that in the western sense are great. There is only one Nation the world knows that may still choose the Spirit instead of the body, and spiritual knowledge rather than material gain—only one Nation amongst all the Nations of the world, only one people amongst all the peoples of the globe. That Nation is India, that people the Indian people ; and if you, the last hope of the spiritual life of man, if you give everything to matter, then in your apostasy the world is betrayed, and in your spiritual death humanity shall find its grave.

—1895, *The Place of Politics in the Life of a Nation*



## A CALL TO BROTHERHOOD

" Mrs. Besant will live in the future as a great teacher of great truths. I shall remember her most as a brilliant orator rousing me and thousands more to go out and work for the social salvation of mankind. I shall remember her toiling long, laborious days that hungry, starving children should be fed, that unhealthy children might be made whole. . . .

" And now today when, at the call of liberty and freedom, she has ranged herself alongside the people of India in their struggle for freedom, and when, as a sign of confidence in her and trust in her ability and capacity to lead them, the people of India have elected her as President of the forthcoming National Congress, she is only doing as she has done all through her life, standing by those who need a friend, giving her experience, her energy, her wonderful power of tongue and pen to those who are crushed in the struggle of life. . .

" It is good to remember the long roll of women, young and old, rich and poor, with whom I have been associated in the work of organizing and rousing the workers and people of all classes. One of the best and bravest is the woman of whom I have tried to write, who, at seventy years of age, has once again set out on a great adventure—the greatest, perhaps of all her life—calling to each one of us to join her in the great work of spreading abroad the principles of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and bringing together in one great Brotherhood all the Nations of the earth."

—3 December 1917, George Lansbury, *New India*.

# *V. The Building of New India*

THE MASTER-BUILDER SHOWS US HOW  
TO BUILD

The prophecy of the dreamers that India shall be a mighty Nation is proving true today. . . . That is the India that is coming, that is the India that is building, and you are the builders.

—Lecture delivered 17 April 1914, *Birth of New India*.

# FROM MOUNTAIN PEAKS— A VISION

## PRINCIPLES OF WORLD-RECONSTRUCTION

*The Foundation of a Stable Society*  
must be BROTHERHOOD.

*The Need of Every Human Being*  
is for HAPPINESS and for conditions favourable  
to his Evolution.

*The Duty of Society*  
is to supply an environment which yields these.

The birth of a human being into an organized Society gives to him a claim, and to Society a duty—the claim of a child on its parents, the duty of the parents to the child. It is this natural and proper claim of the younger on the elder that has been perverted into the aggressive doctrine of “rights”; animals, children, the sick, the ignorant, the helpless, all these have rights—the right to be kindly used, protected, nursed, taught, shielded; the strong, the grown-up, have only duties.

## *The Purpose of Organized Society*

Is the happiness and the welfare of its members, and where it fails to secure these it stands *ipso facto* condemned. "Government exists only for the good of the governed." So said Pythagoras . . . and the phrase has echoed down the centuries, and has become the watchword of those who are seeking the betterment of social conditions.

## *The Theosophical Ideal of the State*

As spoken out by Pythagoras :

The Father-Mother of its citizens,  
The Protector of all.

<sup>1</sup> *The duty of the State, of organized Society, is to secure to every one of its members at least the minimum of welfare—of food, clothing, shelter, education, leisure—which will enable each to develop to the full the faculties which he brought with him into the world.*

There is no necessity of overwork and absence of leisure, of lack of comfort and the means of enjoyment. Human brains are quite clever enough to plan out a social system in which every citizen should have enough for happy life.

*The Only Obstacles* are selfishness and want of will.

*It Was Done Long Ago* under the King-Initiates who ruled in the City of the Golden Gate and in Peru. It was done in the time of King Ramachandra, as may be read in the *Râmâyana*. It was done when the Manu ruled in the City of the Bridge.

<sup>1</sup> Italics Dr. Besant's.

***The Builders*** : But it must be planned out by wisdom, not by ignorance, and brought about by the love and sacrifice of the higher, and not by the uprising of the lower. \* Mobs can make revolutions ; but they cannot build a State.

—1912, *Theosophy*

### ***Principles of Nation-Building***

1. No past condition of a nation can be reproduced, for a nation cannot re-tread the path along which it has evolved. Principles can be re-established, but the application of them must be adapted to the new environment.

2. A national ideal to be useful must be in harmony with the national character, and must grow out of the national past. It must be a native of the soil, not an exotic.

3. Every nation has its own line of evolution, and any attempt to make it follow the line of evolution of another nation would be disastrous, could it be successful ; but—as a matter of fact—any such attempt is foredoomed to failure, because it clashes with the World-Plan. The world exists for the evolution of the Soul, and for this evolution varieties of experience are necessary. Races, sub-races, families, nations, like the two sexes, subserve evolution by their differences, and offer the variety of soil and culture which brings out the varied capacities of the Soul. If they were reduced to a dull uniformity, their value as classes in the school wherein the Soul is educated would be lost, and the Soul would have one quality overdeveloped and another undeveloped.

—1901, *Theosophical Review*

## *Principles of the New Order*<sup>1</sup>

Basing itself on the study of the past, Theosophy can lay down certain principles, to be worked out into details by the highly educated and experienced. The principles are :

1. That Government should be in the hands of the Elders, i.e., the wisest, the most experienced, and the morally best ;

2. That the possession of ability and of power imposes the duty of service ;

3. That freedom brings happiness only to the educated and self-controlled and that no one, so long as he is ignorant and un-self-controlled, should have any share in the governing of others, and should only have such freedom as is consistent with the welfare of the community ;

4. That the life of such a one should be rendered as happy and useful as possible, under discipline until he is fit to "run alone," so that his evolution may be quickened ;

5. That cooperation, mutual aid, should be substituted for competition, mutual struggle ;

6. That the fewer resources a man has within himself, the more means of outer enjoyment should be placed within his reach by Society.

The suggestions which follow are the results of my own study of what has been done in the past, and of my own thought on present conditions. They are *only* suggestions, and many Theosophists might disagree with them. My own wish is to indicate a line of change consonant with Theosophical ideas. Brotherhood imperatively demands

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Besant's own heading.

fundamental social changes, and the rapid growth of unrest, justified by the conditions of the classes that live by manual labour, will force a change ere long. The only question is whether the change shall be brought about by open-eyed wisdom or by blind suffering. At present, Society is engaged in trying the latter plan.

The Land of a Country should be used to support :

(1) The Ruler, his Councillors, Officials of every grade, the administration of Justice, the maintenance of internal Order and of National Defence ;

(2) Religion, Education, Amusement, Pensions, and the care of the Sick ;

(3) All who are not included under (1) and (2), and who gain their livelihood by manual labour in production and distribution.

### *The Years of Man's Life*

Education, free and universal, should be the only work of the period between seven and twenty-one years of age, so that the youths of both sexes should, on reaching manhood and womanhood, be ready to become dutiful and useful citizens, with their faculties well developed, so that they would be capable of leading an honourable, self-supporting and self-respecting life.

The working life—and all should work in one of the three above-named divisions—should last from twenty-one to fifty years of age, unless a shorter term should be found sufficient for the support of the nation. During the remainder of the life, the citizen should be in receipt of a pension, the result of the accumulated surplus of his working years, and:



therefore a repayment, not a gift; he should be free to devote himself to any pursuit he pleased.

Production and Distribution should be organized by such men as make the huge fortunes, now becoming so numerous, and after full provision for all concerned in the producing and distributing, the surplus profits should go to (1) and (2), chiefly to the latter.

The Organization of Industry should be governed by the idea that labour should be rendered as little burdensome as possible by healthy conditions and by the substitution of machinery for human beings in all unpleasant and dangerous work—mining, drainage, and the like; where unpleasant forms of human labour are necessary for the welfare of the community, the hours of labour should be shortened in proportion to the disagreeableness of the task, without any diminution of pay.

*The Life of a Scavenger*: If the scavenger, for instance, is to lead a human life, as much of his work as can be done by machinery should be thus performed; for the rest his hours should be very short, his pay good—since the health of the community depends on him—and recreation, some refining and educative, some purely amusing, should be readily available within his reach. He is an active hand of Nature, helping her in her constant task of transforming the foul and the dangerous into the nourishment of new life and new beauty. He should be regarded . . . not as a drudge but as a co-worker with God. Is it said that he is coarse, repellent? So much the more shame for us, the refined and attractive, who profit by his work, and have made him what he is by our selfishness, our indifference, and our neglect.

**Education :** The value of Reincarnation as an explanation of life is untold. It cheers with the proclamation of final success, and ensures the permanence of every fragment, every seed, of good in us, and time enough for the least evolved to flower into perfection.

*As Applied to the Child :* We see in the child an ego who has come into our care during the time of the growth of his body, to be helped in training it for the purpose for which he has returned to the earth. . . . We seek to draw out of the ego that which he knows, that he may stimulate the germinal mental faculties and so impress the plastic brain. We do not regard the child-body as belonging to us, parents or teachers, but as belonging to the ego, and we see it to be our duty to help him in gaining full possession of it, to work from outside while he works from within, and to follow out any indication given by him as to the best line of study, the easiest road of progress. We give to the child the greatest liberty compatible with his physical, moral, and mental safety, and in everything try to understand and to help, not to coerce.

We must first give a good general education so that all may be able to associate pleasantly in Society by virtue of a common knowledge and a common training; then that specialized education that will fit each for the work he can best do for the State. The Nation must be organized with vocations suited to the people. Until the time again comes when the Devas will cooperate with men by guiding, as they do not do now, the incoming souls to appropriate bodies, we can only know a man's true dharma by the study of the child.

*As Applied to the Undeveloped Soul :*

The congenital criminal is a savage, come to us as to a school, and it is our business to treat him as the intellectual and moral baby which he is, and to restrain the wild beast in him from doing harm.

*The Immediate Treatment of the Criminal*, as he is—we hope, later, to eliminate the type :

*Recognition, Segregation, Reclamation :* These people, and the almost criminal class above them, are recognizable from birth, and they should be segregated in small special schools, given such elementary education as they can assimilate, be treated kindly and firmly, have many games, and be taught a rough form of manual labour.

The teachers in these schools should be volunteers from the higher social classes, willing to teach and play with the boys, and capable of arousing in them a feeling of admiration, attachment, and loyalty, which would evoke obedience. They must be with those who are obviously their superiors if this is to be done.

*Happy Labour :* From these schools they should be drafted into small colonies, bright, pleasant villages, with shops, playground, music-hall and restaurant, ruled by men of the same type as before ; they should have everything to make life pleasant, except freedom to make it mischievous, and miserable ; these colonies would supply gangs of labourers for all the rougher kinds of work. . . . To do right would be made pleasant, while to be rowdy and idle would be made unpleasant ; “ he that will not work neither shall he eat ” is a sound maxim, for food is made by work, and he who, being able, refuses to make it has no claim to it. Checks

might be given for each hour's work, exchangeable at the shops and restaurants for the necessities of life, and the man could do as much or as little as he liked ; the equivalent in necessities and luxuries would be at his own choice.

### ***Beauty Everywhere***

*From Slums to Gardens :* In the light of Theosophy, it is the duty of the elders to plan out, and gradually to construct, towns of decent dwellings with sufficient interspaces, to which should be transplanted the dwellers in the slums, these poison-spots must be pulled down, and the soil, sodden with the filth of generations, should be turned into gardens ; the filth will then be changed into trees and flowers, whereas to build new houses on such soil is to invite disease.

*The Crying Need :* More Beauty must be sought, for it is a necessity of life for all, not a luxury for the few. Beauty refines and cultivates, and reproduces itself in the forms and manners of those who live under its influences. Beauty in dress, in the home, in the town, is a crying need as an evolutionary force. . . . When people were more surrounded by natural beauty than they are now, the clothes of the people of every class were beautiful, as they still are in the East ; it is natural to man to seek to express himself in Beauty ; it is only as he becomes far removed from Nature, that he accepts with indifference ugliness in clothes and surroundings.

—1912, *Theosophy*

## ***THE KEY IS IN INDIA***

In the 'Root-Stock exist the germs of all the various qualities of Fifth-Race mankind which become embodied and balanced in our Root-Race. These had to be developed one after another ; and so the sub-races were dominated by one of these chiefly, and had to develop along those lines and assimilate them together. That is one part of India's great mission towards humanity in the world. The germs of all these sub-races are in her, as the child is in the womb of the mother, and the sub-race comes forth, develops a special quality or capacity through the new sub-race and then reacts upon the Mother. And so her children, spread over the whole western world, are developing their qualities, especially the quality that dominates each. The fourth sub-race is there with its mission of beauty, and the fifth is there with its science of mind, and both can find their key in India from whom they spring, and to whom many of them come back in order to help in the building up of the type of the whole Fifth Race. I cannot go far into that. The whole subject is of profound interest, but if we realize that evolution in the sub-races is for the enriching of the typical Fifth-Race Man, then we shall understand a little more of the way in which migrations go out and some of each come back to the Motherland, and how India is the common Motherland of the whole Aryan, or Fifth, Race.

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## **THE WORK BEFORE US**

The Sixth Sub-race will mostly be western. The work here is to build up the great Empire of the Fifth Sub-race by linking together, as I have very often told you in the past, England and India. The two together have been chosen to build a great World-Empire. While that is being built, the younger civilization will grow up under its protection, and the transition to that civilization is the work that the members of The Theosophical Society should take active part in at the present time . . . We have to prepare for the future along certain lines of definite work. . . .

The first of these is Education. You must begin by building up the citizens of the civilization, and the citizens are, of course, in the children of today. Education must be founded on Brotherhood, Reincarnation, and Karma, and therefore on the study of the child, finding out what he has brought with him from past experiences as capacity. Do not try to force him into certain definite moulds or grooves, as children are forced today, whether they suit them or not. Find out what suits the child, and do not give him what suits the teacher. . . . Theosophy lays down the lines of right education. The principles are universal, and the application is national. . . . Do not mistake me: I do not mean that every one of you must be a teacher; but I mean that every one of you can find no nobler service for the Motherland than helping education. You must help those who can teach, if you cannot teach yourself.

There are other lines of work and there is one which is very very badly needed here in India. It is the treatment of the so-called criminal classes . . . The prison system wants

absolute reform. The criminals have to be trained, not to be brutalized. The criminals are our brothers. They are younger. Try to lift them up to your own level. True, they have broken their duty to Society, but out of ignorance. The duty of a Theosophist is the duty of an elder brother to the younger. Our criminal system is more brutal than any system which exists in any other civilized country. . . . If you exerted yourselves you could reform the system. There is no good in blaming the Government, when you are such a large population, and the rulers a few people. You can impose your will if you care for your brothers in prison, as much as you cared about your brothers in Ootacamund and Coimbatore. You brought us out <sup>1</sup> . . . .

We have to deal with the great problems of capital and labour. . . . In the new civilization, cooperation is to take the place of competition. Many of you may go to the villages and explain to the people the benefits of cooperation. Much has been done ; but little compared with what remains to be done . . . .

You can choose, each one for yourself, to work in this great world-vineyard, or you can remain idle. Remember that on your choice depends your own future. And on the choice of a majority of you depends the speed of the coming of the new civilization. You can quicken it. You can retard it also. And the choice must be made.

—23 January 1918, *New India*

<sup>1</sup> The unquenchable demands of the people for the release of Dr. Besant and her colleagues in internment in Ootacamund and Coimbatore effected a speedy release.

# STATECRAFT

## *THE ART OF POLITICS*

[In] Politics as in everything else . . . a man needs sound thought to make right action . . . . If men live from hand to mouth in politics . . . they may often for a momentary gain incur a serious danger, and judging by the things of the moment only may lose the very object that they really desire to obtain . . . .

I mean by "politics" every form of activity which is carried on in a particular geographical district, under a Government of any kind that rules over that district, no matter what that Government may be called—imperial or local, municipal or parliamentary. . . . I distinguish political action from voluntary action by the element of force that enters into the constitution of the former, and the fact that if you want to escape from the scope of the action you must leave the geographical district over which the political government has authority . . . .

No more can you gain an idea of a real Society by taking a man separately, as though he were a marble and Society a heap of marbles with no cohesion in them, you can no more do it and understand Society, than you can tear from the living body one of its organs, and studying the organ by



itself, try to understand the working of the whole. For to understand the human body you must study it in life, in the functions, in the working of every part, in every single organ doing a particular work, not for its own gain but for the common good, and the nobler ideal that is spreading amongst men is that we live not to assert our rights but to do our duties, and so to make one mighty Unity where each shall discharge his functions for the common good of all.

Now India is in this remarkable position, that from her own past she brings down the ideal of a system that is essentially founded upon duty . . . India is today a strange compound of conflicting theories, of conflicting ideas, is a strange compound of an ancient Nation ruled politically by a modern people, and the two ideas are here face to face. . . . One, the old idea of duty . . . and the other, urged by those who would take as it were the western system completely, transport democracy from America and Great Britain into Indian soil, use the democratic methods, claim the democratic rights, employ here all the democratic organizations ; not quite sure whether the soil will suit what is here an exotic, but forced by the necessities of the position to use some of the methods which are familiar in the hands of their rulers. . . . Therefore, while, for my own part, I stand for the ideal of ancient India, and look on that as a thousandfold loftier than the mushroom civilizations that have grown up in later days, none the less am I bound to admit that we must deal with the country as we have it, and that where you are pushed into western methods, you must adapt your own methods somewhat, so as to meet the new conditions, so as to deal with the new ways of thought.

## THE THINKER

... There are three great ways of influencing human life and human conduct : the first and the greatest of all is the work of the Thinker, who by himself alone, face to face with the problems of life, uses all the powers that he has, and looking out into air which is unbeckled by the dust raised in the strifes of parties, deals with principle instead of detail, deals with essence instead of form, the Thinker, he who gives out to the world some mighty thought. . . . Action is but for a day, thought is everlasting in its generating energy ; and therefore the greatest among the sons of men, nature's most imperial children, are the Thinkers. . . .

## THE TEACHER

Then from the sphere of thought there comes down a great idea into the sphere of discussion ; . . . it passes from the brain of the Thinker to the lips of the teacher ; and the teacher going out amongst his fellowmen and gathering masses of the people together, uses all his power of brain, all his imaginative ability, all his skill of golden tongue and deftness of oratorical presentment, to popularize among these masses of the people that thought which was born in the brain of the Thinker. . . .

## THE POLITICIAN

Then comes the third stage—action. . . . The great thought is to become bread for the hungry, and drink for the thirsty, and shelter for the homeless, and defence for the oppressed. There is the work of the politician, there is the work of the actor. He applies to practice that which the

Thinker has thought, which the teacher has uttered, and he brings it down into the practical life of man, and makes the common lot happier and better by applying to the ordinary daily life the great thoughts and the teachings that have gone before. . . .

There should be no quarrel between the politician and the teacher, no quarrel between the politician and the Thinker. . . . Each is wanted by the other. The Thinker is like the head, and without the head the body could not act ; the politician is like the hands, and without the hands you could not have action, though the brain should plan. . . . But there should be no confusion between the functions. The Thinker weakens his power if he mixes himself up with the strifes of political parties. . . . Nor should the teacher be a politician ; for the teacher is to put the ideal before the eyes of men. No ideal can at once be put into complete practice, no ideal can be carried uninjured through the struggles of a legislative assembly ; for there the principle has to be whittled away, has to be subjected to compromise, has to be narrowed down. . . . Compromise is a necessary part of political action and you cannot avoid it. . . . Statesmanship is skilful compromise. . . . Therefore, I say, the teacher should never be a politician. Let him set up the ideal which politicians are to work towards ; let him stand aloof, holding up the picture which is to attract the hearts of men. . . . The work of the politician [is] to make the ideal ultimately realizable by going towards it. Step by step he must work in the right direction, and the ideal must be held up steadily, in order that the final direction may not be lost in the necessarily devious walking . . . .

Some of you are politicians. How are you going to choose your lines of advance? Has it ever struck you that the current of thought in a nation is that which is seen in the hopes, the aspirations, the longings of the young. . . . Therefore I say, watch the young, for what moves them is a movement of the future, and if you want to legislate on lines that will last, see what is most touching the hearts of the young ones; for there is the future life of the people, there is what it will desire. . . .

The duties of the politician are what were in olden days the duties of the Kshatriya, the great caste in the old days that had all these political duties in hand, . . . that had this charge in the State, and was bound to administer it for the common good.

We find the politician limited. He may make a good law, but if the people are bad the good law is useless. He may make an improvement in outside shape, but if the people are unworthy of it the old evils return despite the new shape he has made. Therefore is it that you need the *teacher*; therefore is it that you need the *Thinker*; and only where they are at work in a nation, making noble ideals that purify the heart, only there will the politician be successful and the progress of the nation be secured. . . .

What has Theosophy to do with politics? I say that it has everything to do with them. It has to build up a State of which Brotherhood shall be the foundation; in which the rule should be accepted that every child born into a civilized Nation has a right to be surrounded by the conditions that enable him to develop to the utmost every faculty that he brings with him into the world. Until that is the rule of a

State, there is no true civilization. There lies, then, the duty of a Theosophist : He has to deal with politics in order that a Nation may flourish. The question of the Liberty of a people—do you call that politics or not ? I call it politics, because to me “ politics ” means the organized life of a Nation. It is not party politics, it is not a question of this man up and the other man down ; it is not a question of quarrelling between different detailed views and methods ; but the Liberty of a Nation is a point that no one, who feels the duty of a religious man to his Nation, can ever possibly put aside on any pretext. . . . The great reason why a Nation should be Free and Self-Governing is that because without these a man is not a man : he is only a half-man . . . .

The duty of a Theosophist here is to help in the liberation of India—not of The Theosophical Society, because our Society is international, everywhere, and you cannot ask a Russian Theosophist to help in the liberation of India. I speak only of the Indian Theosophists and Theosophists who are residents here. The duty is not imposed upon them by The Society, but by the principles of Theosophy. There lies the duty of the true Theosophist—a human duty, a National duty, a duty which comes from service to the Motherland, which none has a right to forbid. Your individual influence on the lesser political movements will be valuable, because it should be guided by the wisdom you have gained amongst us, and by the application of those great laws of Karma, Reincarnation, and Brotherhood—the only sure foundation for the continued life of any Nation . . . .

—1895, *The Place of Politics in the Life of a Nation*

## A LESSON IN STATECRAFT

During the short space of three years in the Indian political field, Dr. Besant secured that which has not since been achieved—the union of the dominant Hindu and Muslim elements and the union of the conflicting Congress elements. Forgotten were differences. India alone was remembered.

Mr. Jinnah then worked for a "United India." Hindus spoke from the Muslim League platform and Muslims from the Congress platform, their two Congresses having concurrent gatherings.

If any one doubts that Dr. Besant was the uniting force between the Hindu and Muslim communities, the tribute of the Hon. Syed Ali Nabi, the last speaker before the fateful "Self-Determination" resolution was put to vote in the 1917 Conference of the All-India Muslim League, will make the position clear.

"I should be untrue to myself, untrue to the Muslim community, untrue to the community at large if I failed at the moment to publicly acknowledge the services rendered by that great and sincere lover of India, Mrs. Annie Besant, who was mainly instrumental in bringing about the spirit of unity between the two great communities." The reporter here inserts the words "long and continued applause." The speaker concluded: "It was she who made that union possible and we cannot be sufficiently grateful to her."

\* \* \* \*

"It was Dr. Besant's efforts with the great leaders, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, at Poona in 1914, and ever since, which brought about the happy union, whose full significance has been seen and felt at Lucknow . . . which has closed the gulf of nine long years. *New India* has been instrumental in bringing the two Parties in the Congress together, so that today there are no Moderates and Extremists, but all Nationalists, the majority of whom have seen the wisdom of Mrs. Besant's contentions."

—3 January 1917, Editorial *New India*

“ So the Home Rulers have at last captured both the Congress and the League. Glory to Mrs. Besant ! Her bitter persecution has not gone in vain. Practically the whole of the educated Indian community has caught the cry of Home Rule in right earnest, first raised by this illustrious lady. Even moderate Congressmen, who did not see things eye to eye with her, have become converts to her views.”

—Amrita Bazar Patrika

How was this miracle accomplished, a miracle that all today would see repeated ? Dr. Besant herself reveals the secret :

“ Nothing is too great a sacrifice if it secures a united front.”

Of the deliberations of the historic Calcutta Congress in 1917 Dr. Besant tells a story that might well be called “ A Lesson in Statesmanship ” :

“ The Committees of the Congress and the Muslim League met for some hours, and were profoundly interesting. On all the main principles the representatives of both bodies were thoroughly at one, a few very minor points of difference having been settled at Calcutta. The difference was on the details of the representation of the two communities in the Legislative Councils of the future, and the interest lay in the thorough threshing out of every aspect of the question, the grasp of principles and of details, the statesmanlike willingness to come to a common agreement, and the admirable spirit of sacrifice and the good feeling manifested by almost every member of the two parties. If proof were wanted of the capacity of the Indians to govern themselves it was found in that Chamber ; both parties made sacrifices, the Muslims in Bengal, the Hindus in the United Provinces.

With the utmost patience, a *via media* was sought, almost found, lost again, again acquired, until finally complete agreement was reached, and Hindus and Muslims stood shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart. All honour to the leaders of both communities alike, for both realized that Indian unity was the supreme necessity, and, refusing to yield to the clamour outside among the more ignorant of both communities, they resolutely led the way to union. Posterity will bless them for their patriotism and their courage. How ringing were the cheers which later on welcomed the Muslim leaders to the Congress platform, and those which welcomed the Congress leaders to the Muslim League platform. The representatives of India in both Halls passionately acclaimed the union, and the joint scheme is now accepted by a United India, to be presented to the British Nation as the demand of a Nation awake to its own needs, and conscious of its own strength."

## THE FAMOUS CONGRESS-LEAGUE SCHEME

### WHAT WERE ITS IRREDUCIBLE MINIMA ?

I helped to formulate the Congress-League Scheme, passed by the Lucknow Congress in 1916. I have never varied in my support of that Scheme from its passage in Lucknow to the present day. . . . I hold it to be, as I have often said, our irreducible minimum, and I will accept no Reforms that fall short of its essential features—the four-fifths majority of elected members, the control of the purse, the enlarged franchise, including the Hindu-Muslim



*entente, a moiety of the Executive Council representing the majority of the elected members. This, through the control of the purse by the Legislature, and the elective half of the Executive, ensures Responsible Government in the near future, and therein lies its value. The "irreducible minimum," it must be noted, applies to the Government of India as well as to Local Governments.*

—22 June 1918, *New India*

### ***The Power of the Purse***

The essential part of the Congress-League Scheme [is] the power of the purse and a substantial elected majority. These are the two points that really matter. I was asked by one of the high officials of the country, "Mrs. Besant, why do you want a majority in the Provincial Council? Why not be satisfied with the Scheme of Panchayat, Taluq and District Board and Municipalities?" I answered: "Unless we have a majority and the power of the purse, we shall never have the money that we want for carrying out our schemes of local Self-Government." I was asked, "Why do you want it in the Supreme Council?" My answer was, "for the same reason." Unless we have the power of the purse and an elected majority in the Supreme Government, we shall not be able to deal with the customs and the excise and to foster our industries, and to place the whole trade of the country in the hands of the Indians instead of in the hands of the English merchant. We want all stages from the Panchayats, we cannot break a single link. I say there is nothing more vital to you than the control of the purse. Only then can you make the Executive Council responsible to the people.

—21 January 1918, *New India*

In judging of any scheme, remember the power of the purse is the most important part. If you find that the power of the purse is not given to your representatives ; if you find that the power of the purse is in the hands of the Executive, then whatever glamour there may be in the other parts of the measure, the essential power will be out of your hands, and you will be helpless as you have been so long. That is what you have to consider.

—16 April 1918, *New India*

### *The Power of Deadlock*

The Power of the Purse in the hands of the Legislature and an irremovable Executive. Our critics say that it will bring a deadlock. I do not deny their statement ; when the Executive is irremovable and the Legislature is representative, then if they come in conflict one or the other must yield. If the Legislature gives a mandate and the Executive refuses to carry it out, then the situation can be tided over by the Legislature by the one and the only way, viz., refusal of supplies . . . I, a gentle old woman, wish to follow only constitutional methods, and refusal of supplies is the potent weapon in our armoury. An irremovable Executive might ask the Legislature to go to their respective constituencies over and over again ; and consult the nation on the point of grievances. If the constituencies re-elect them often and often, then the Executive must yield one day or the other. It is not that I am very fond of deadlocks. But, as Bright said, there can be no Constitution without deadlocks. . . . In the schemes of all the English Colonies, there were

deadlocks. . . . We claim our scheme to be only the first step towards full Responsible Government. . . .

—15 March 1918, *New India*

### ***The Enlarged Electorate***

The essentials of the Congress-League Scheme are that we asked for enlarged electorates ; we asked that four-fifths might be elected and one-fifth nominated. We asked that there should not be less than 125 members in the Legislative Councils of major provinces and 50 to 75 in the minor. We asked that members should be elected on as broad a franchise as possible, that adequate representation for the representation of minorities should be provided, and with regard to Muhammadans we asked that they should be represented through special electorates in certain definite proportions, and lastly we asked that no bill or clause should be brought in which affected either Hindus or Muhammadans if three-fourths of the members of the Community in the Legislative Council objected to the bill.

—1 August 1918, *New India*

### ***A Time-Limit***

You must continue your agitation here and in England, with all the force you can command . . . and rest not until you get what you want in one, and only one, Parliamentary statute clearly defining the stages and fixing an inexorable time-limit. In my Presidential Address in the Congress, I had put down the time-limit of ten years simply to give precision and pointedness to our demand. You may extend it if you like, but see that it definitely gets in the scheme.

—15 March 1918, *New India*

We have asked that there shall be complete Responsible Government in India at an early date, not floating about in the air, not to be left indefinite, for we know that that means a putting off and a putting off continually. The demand is that Self-Government should be given at an early date, and that the date is to be named in the Statute, so that there shall be no quarrel afterwards about it.

—19 April 1918, *New India*

### ***A Statute or Act of Parliament***

We asked that something positive in the shape of an Act of Parliament be passed for establishing Responsible Government in India. We do not ask for the abolition of the sovereignty of the Crown. We do not attack the Throne of the King-Emperor, but we say in our internal affairs, in the business of our own Nation, public and private, we ought to make our own laws, elect our own men, get rid of those men if they fail us after we have elected them. That is the freedom that every Colony enjoys and that freedom we claim for ourselves. . . . We ask for equal rights with the Self-Governing Dominions, and without the right of direct representation in the central authority of the Empire our Self-Determination would not be complete. . . . When the National Assembly is constituted, it may shape our Nation's future growth according to our instincts of nationality. We do not want another England, Scotland, France, or Germany. We want an India—Indian in thought, Indian in ways and customs, Indian in aspirations, Indian from head to foot, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. (Loud applause.)

That is the Nation of the future, and that is the Motherland that we worship. When you say *Vande Mataram*, it is *Vande Mataram* that you worship and not some other land which is not yours.

—Speech delivered 1 January 1919, *New India*

***The Broad Principle to which we must cling :***

No subordinate power is worth having if the power behind it remains—autocracy.

Example : No “provincial autonomy” while the supreme [authority] remains as it is at the present time with the power of the purse, with the power of the excise, and all the big resources of revenue in the hands of that Assembly and no power to the people to control it.

—10 June 1918, *New India*

Personally I feel that the Central Council and Provincial Councils should advance side by side. If such advance is not made as it was suggested and worked out in the Congress-League Scheme, you will have the extreme difficulty of the Provinces going towards Responsible Government with autocracy on the top of them. Unless we can get rid of the autocracy in its essential point, it will be of very small value to win provincial autonomy, and there will be a large number of States, which, being completely separated, are helpless, are unable to focus their opinions and their forces on the Central Government, while the autocracy stands above the whole of them, able to interfere at any moment where it disapproves of the action of any of the States. It is not a case of these States being Self-Governing,

strong and held together, strengthened and nourished by the Central Government responsible to the people, but it is a case of separate States, themselves autonomous, in the grip of autocracy over the whole of them. Hence, any analogy drawn from the United States of America or Switzerland is entirely misleading.

—1 August 1918, *New India*

## HOW WAS THE CONGRESS-LEAGUE SCHEME TO BE ACHIEVED?

### *By Organization*

You may have seen I am trying to make an organization for the whole of the country ; in that in every district there would be one man ready to act in an emergency, who shall have one friend in every taluq ready to follow, who in turn will have representatives in towns and villages ready to act when the word is given. I am working out that, in order that we may have machinery whereby we can organize our agitation.

—16 April 1918, *New India*

One matter of immediate importance is the forming of a Provincial Committee with District Sub-Committees for the selection of candidates for all elective offices in each Presidency—Legislative Councils, District Boards, Municipalities, etc. In every election, candidates belonging to the National Party should be ready, presented to the constituencies long before elections begin, that they may be familiar to those whom they seek to represent. The appointment

of these Political Committees and Sub-Committees in this Presidency should be at once taken in hand by the Madras Indian leaders, though later they would probably be appointed for each area by the Council administering it.

—10 and 17 April 1914, *The Commonwealth*

India's liberty is now in the balance, and we must win it when the opportunity is given us, because opportunity not grasped becomes an obstacle in the future. . . .

You want meetings in every association where politics may be discussed. You want meetings on street-corners of towns, villages and cities. Enthusiasm and love of liberty for India exist all over India just now. That Monster Petition<sup>1</sup> has done much, but people must follow in the wake of that and teach the people who are roused to interest about what has already been done and what yet remains to be done. Students can help to collect money—I suppose G.O. 559<sup>2</sup> does not prohibit that,—older men can first study and then talk. If you explain the main features of the Congress-League Scheme and emphasize them and make them clear with illustrations, you will gradually get the whole mass of Indian people to speak out for it like one man.

We must all give to India this service. Let smaller things wait. Let the Mother see the freedom you are to win, see the glory you are to create; remember that that Mother must depend upon every one of you in order that her chains may be broken, and remember if you do your work, you

<sup>1</sup> A petition signed by millions of Indians, sent from the Home Rule League to the Viceroy.

<sup>2</sup> A repressive order controlling the activities of students.

will leave to your sons, to your daughters, to your grandchildren after you a New India, a happy India, a free India, a prosperous India. Now is the time to win that splendid prize, and a little effort now will do more for the winning of it than months, nay, years, of labour will do if you let slip the opportunity now.

—28 January 1918, *New India*

### ***By Compromise***

That joint scheme, as I have often said, was a compromise. Now what does a compromise mean? It means that when a common principle is accepted, as thoughtful men can never agree on every single point, they meet together, accept the principles, and then, discussing the details, they give and take. We, in Madras, for instance, were in favour of completely elected Provincial and Supreme Legislative Councils. But there was a thoughtful minority, not only in the Congress party but also in the Muslim League who wanted a four-fifth majority. And we had to yield. For when we are fighting for freedom and when you are opposed to a strong and well-organized body like the Civil Service in this country and the English Chambers of Commerce, we have to present a united front. Hindus and Musalmans, the more advanced and the less advanced, we should go together. When we have gained Self-Government, then we can afford to differ about smaller questions.

—21 January 1918, *New India*

The third amendment is about the question of the time-limit, viz., a period of fifteen years to attain full Responsible



Government. Personally, I think that fifteen years is too long a period, but, although I think so, I will not move for a shorter period, because, as has been said quite properly, we came to a compromise in Bombay. . . . When I had the honour of proposing our President, I pointed out to you that, when you had an army going on different roads, cavalry, artillery and infantry, it is idle for your cavalry only to advance, and so allow the enemy to kill it and then to take the next batch. That is the way to defeat and not the way to victory. We do require union, and though we endorse the statement that we are fit for Responsible Government, I, at least, say here I would rather wait for it even for six or more years than part with those men in the Indian Nation who helped us in Bombay and worked with us in the Special Session. I feel that a compromise was made. I am not ashamed of it. A compromise with the bureaucracy, a compromise with the Government, a compromise with an enemy, that is a shameful thing ; but a compromise with your brothers, a compromise in your own family for family unity, to walk a little more slowly, because you will then be one party, that compromise was an honour and glory to those who made it, and I am not ashamed that I make a compromise of that kind. . . . The situation was rightly said to be worse today than it was before, and in the face of that serried army of autocracy, in the face of a bureaucracy, knit together in order to hold on to its office. . . . in the face of that disciplined army, we ought not to go on like this, every man going in his own way, every man asking for his own idea. . . .

—31 December 1918, *New India*

### ***By Lawful Agitation***

If we find Mr. Montagu's scheme gives less than we have asked for, then I do not think that we are to accept it or to take it, because some other things are given. I think that unless we are given that which is our minimum, our proper answer is : " Do what you like, we can't accept ; we will have no part in your scheme ; we will work to get more ; we will agitate, agitate, and agitate, until the whole of our demand is given."

—16 April 1918, *New India*

We have asked for control of the purse. We have asked for control over the Executive. Now suppose when the reforms come out, you find these things are not given, suppose that in the Statute there is no date given at which complete Responsible Government will prevail in India, suppose they do not give you the power of the purse, suppose they do not give you control by the Legislature over the Executive, I ask you to realize that, unless these things are given to you, the reforms will be useless and will be another fraud upon the Indian Nation. Unless you have real power, unless you control your taxation, unless you can control the Executive, without these changes you may as well have no reforms at all, for you should remember that a small inadequate reform becomes an obstacle in the way of larger reform which is wanted.

The Minto-Morley reforms have been so inadequate that in the Legislative Council of Madras one of the Members in the presence of the Governor declared that the proceedings were a farce. In your Supreme Legislative Council another

Member declared that that Council was only a glorified debating society. This is not political power. That is not the reform that India demands, and if we are only offered the mere simulacrum of reform, then I say that we ought not to accept it, that we ought not to say that we are satisfied even for a moment, but that we should carry on an active, a more active than ever agitation, until we get this.

—19 April 1918, *New India*

*Working for the release of Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, Dr. Besant said :*

The resolution is one of what I may call three strings to our bow. The first string is a meeting such as the present, and those meetings ought to be steadily continued to ask straight out for the release. But if we cannot succeed in that way, there is no reason why we should not try other plans for their release. One of those that has already been on foot is the presentation, first probably to the Allahabad High Court, and if it refuses it, to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, of a petition challenging the Defence of India Act itself as unconstitutional. . . . That is the position that I may call the third string to our bow. Carry on the agitation, do not weaken it, but send up the petition to the Privy Council. That may very likely succeed. You know that I have a great love, from my own training under Charles Bradlaugh, of destroying a bad law by an appeal to the law.

—16 November 1917, *New India*

*Of the Commonwealth of India Bill, on which Dr. Besant lectured for the first time in Calcutta in February 1925, she writes :*

We shall need a strong and determined agitation, not a noisy or violent one : in 1917 there was never the smallest riot, there was never a hint of violence, and that is the model we must set before ourselves. The Will to Freedom, thus shown, is irresistible, and it is that Will which must assert itself, and place India in her right place, a Free Nation in the Indo-British Commonwealth, an equal partner, and the strongest factor for a World-Peace.

—February 1925, *The Theosophist*

[*Dr. Besant's first message, in September 1917, after recovering her freedom, was to the Editor of "New India."*]

The tone of your comments must be sober. Express satisfaction at the success of national constitutional agitation carried through without violence or disorder. But there must be no crowing or taunts.

### ***By Calm Sobriety***

I want you to realize that this is a transitional condition, that the end of this—Home Rule for India—will only come when the War is complete, and that when you have that power, then will begin more than ever the terrible responsibility that rests on the citizen of a free Nation, when you will have no one to correct your blunders save painful experience, no one to help you save your own will and your own capacity, when you will be out of leading strings, when you will be choosing your own path, responsible for the prosperity of your own Nation, the education of your own people and the welfare of all classes alike. That should surely sober you in your own political discussions, should

make you thoughtful, careful, industrious in your efforts to understand, for only where calmness and sobriety reign is it possible for a Nation to work out its own salvation and become truly prosperous and happy, because just and righteous in its administration.

—25 October 1917, *New India*

### ***By Boldness***

Before the English public lay great stress upon your right to demand Home Rule. . . . Never mind about the stale objection of embarrassing the Government. Even in the middle of this world-wide War, the electorate of England is doubled, and women's rights have been won. The English people think that if matters are left to the people, they work well. Englishmen like bold actions and bold words. Soft melodious speeches do not please them. They are accustomed to rough speech. They are accustomed to be knocked at by the newspapers. . . . Englishmen like no pleadings, no beggings. They never care for those who think themselves to be inferior to them. They do not like any hedging or softening. That is not the way to appeal to them. A dog with his tail between the legs is kicked off by an Englishman. But he likes one which goes to him with his tail erect. . . . He does not like a fearful, crouching man, or an animal. The way to appeal to him is not through fear. You must tell him boldly that you are determined to have Home Rule which is your God-given right. In such matters he appreciates boldness and looks with contempt upon beggings and prayings. So you must take into consideration the nature of the Englishman with whom you are to deal.

Do not show him that you are inferior in any way. Claim from him, as his equal, what you want to demand. I know you are brought up in an atmosphere of inferiority in your schools where a first-rate Indian is pushed away in order to find a place for a fifth-rate Englishman. You must feel that not to be free is a stain upon your fair name. Whether your overlords are Englishmen or others, still it is a stain pure and simple upon your country. Remove it by claiming freedom from the English people. Be their equals and then you will be benefited by making your own the qualities of Englishmen and giving Englishmen your spiritual wealth of knowledge. That is your destiny, have faith in it, the future is yours, and you can make or mar it.

—15 March 1918, *New India*

A Nation does not petition for Freedom. She proclaims it.

—1 March 1917, *New India*

### ***By Utter Dedication***

The spirit needed is the spirit of readiness to sacrifice for the Mother, and to seize the opportunity of serving Her, and of uplifting Her name in the eyes of the world, not the spirit of bargaining for so much privilege in exchange for so much service.

—27 February 1917, *New India*

## **DR. BESANT'S PROGRAMME**

*[In the Delhi Congress of 1918, the first steps were taken away from that sane and balanced programme which had been leading India rapidly up the highway to Freedom. Dr. Besant states the divergent aims of the Minority Party which she represented, but she understands and sympathizes with those who radically differ from her.]*

### ***The Majority Policy***

(1) *The policy for this year, as laid down by the majority :*

(a) A departure from the dignified courtesy hitherto shown to the Royal House, and due from every part of the Empire, so long as it accepts the British connexion and the sovereignty of the Imperial Crown.

(b) Complete Provincial Autonomy, with the acceptance at the same time of stages to be laid down by Statute, and simultaneous advance in the Provincial and Central Governments ; the modifications at Bombay having introduced into the Government of India the transference of most subjects to Ministers, the demand is practically equivalent to the demand for complete Home Rule immediately, except the responsibility for peace, tranquillity, and the defence of the country.

(c) No negotiation or public argument on the Draft Bill in Britain, but the insistence that the deputation should claim complete Provincial Autonomy in every part of British India.

(d) The breaking of Congress continuity by the rejection of the members already chosen under the mandate of the Bombay Congress, and the election of a new Selection Committee.

(e) The rejection of the proposed Congress in London and

(f) of the petition to the King.

(g) The destruction of the British Committee and India by the sudden withdrawal of the promise of support contained in Art. XXVIII of the Constitution, without securing the necessary proportion of votes of the Provinces for such an alteration in the Constitution, as laid down in Art. XXX.

### *The Minority Policy*

(2) *The policy of the minority party is :*

(a) To preserve continuity with the attitude of previous Congresses in respect to the King-Emperor and his successors.

(b) To stand by the resolutions of previous Congresses on Self-Government, and the well-considered modifications of the Bombay Conference in the M.-C. Scheme.

(c) To insist on the introduction of responsibility in the Government of India, and not to imperil this by pressing for complete Provincial Autonomy, which can be checkmated by the transfer of subjects to the Central Government, and the maintenance there of Autocracy.

(d) To make a concerted effort with all willing to co-operate in the attack on the citadel of Autocracy, and the gaining of Fiscal Autonomy—the vital matters in the struggle for liberty.

(e) Steadily to maintain the gaining of Home Rule, to be ensured by Statute with the successive stages laid down therein, and India's equal place in the Empire.

(f) The sending of a deputation to Britain to press India's claims, and to negotiate for the utmost that can be



obtained from Parliament, cooperating with those making similar efforts, and bringing all possible pressure to bear on Parliament.

(g) To this end to support the petitions to the King and the Parliament to put an end to Autocracy in India, and

(h) To take part in the Home Rule Conference in London.

(i) To do what we can to discharge the obligations incurred to the British Committee by any action we can take on the All-India Congress Committee.

(j) To endeavour to obtain representation for the submerged classes and to work for their uplift, as well as for that of the agricultural and labouring classes, by the introduction of free and compulsory education.

(k) To help in England all parties who agree with our policy or with parts of it.

(l) To form ourselves into an organized party within the National Congress, with a definite programme to be agreed on by previous discussion. Such seems to me to be, in outline, our immediate policy.

### *The Emergence of Parties*

(3) The emergence of parties should be frankly recognized as representing schools of opinion in the Nation. We all agree in working for Self-Government, but there are many differences as to how and when. Why should not all be seen as parts of the political life of the Nation, and all freely discussed in the National Congress? Political life is now too active to find expression in a single line of activity. This is a thing to rejoice over, not to lament. I am glad and proud

of the share I have had in this increase of National life and National self-respect, and I had looked forward to exaggerated expressions of it, that I should have to oppose. I had wished that we could have remained together until the Draft Bill conflict was over, but the exuberant life refuses to run in one groove.

—9 January 1919, *New India*

My dharma lies in obeying the order . . . to “claim India’s place among the Nations,” and to preserve the connexion with Britain for the helping of the world. So whether in a minority of one in the All-India Congress Committee, or in the future majority claiming Dominion Status, I work on with indifference to minority or majority. The Will of the Inner Government will be done at last, no matter what may be the size of the present parties. In the end, Their Will will triumph—the time is nothing. The Congress may pass whatever resolutions it pleases; whatever is against that Will will be broken.

—December 1928, *The Theosophist*

## **HOME RULE INVOLVES A HOME TO RULE**

### **LISTEN, BROTHERS!**

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The Home Rule League has been established to carry out the following Objects :

1. To secure Home Rule for India through all law-abiding and constitutional activity.

2. To maintain the connexion with Great Britain, by becoming a free Nation within the British Empire, under the Imperial Crown of His Majesty the King-Emperor, George V, and his successors.

3. To support and strengthen the National Congress, which has laboured for thirty years to lay the foundations of Indian Self-Government.

4. To carry on a continuous educative propaganda on the necessity of Home Rule for India.

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HOME RULE means the Government of the People by the People.

HOME RULE means the right of the People to send their Representatives to make laws for the People, and to levy taxes on the People. Subjection to laws not made by the Representatives of the People is Tyranny. The levying of taxes not approved of by the Representatives of the People is Robbery. Thus has England proclaimed, and she has enforced these principles in her own Government, so that no one now denies them. Home Rule in England has carried out these principles. Home Rule in India will also carry them out.

HOME RULE means the Education of the People, free and compulsory for every child.

HOME RULE means the cooperation of all to ensure a happy and prosperous life for every citizen of the State ; the creation of conditions which will enable every child born into the Nation to develop all the faculties he or she brings with

him or her into the world, so that each may grow to the full stature of the manhood or womanhood of which he or she is capable.

HOME RULE means that every grown-up person shall have a share in choosing the persons who shall represent him in the Village Panchayat, the Taluq Board, the District Board, the Provincial Legislative Council and the Supreme Legislative Council. This will not all come at once. Every Village resident householder will at first have a vote in the Village Panchayat ; probably there will be a small property or educational qualification for the franchise for the higher Boards and Councils. There will be no advantages or disadvantages attached to caste, creed, or colour.

HOME RULE means that white and coloured people will be equal before the law and in practice ; that judicial officers and their courts will be stationary, not peripatetic during the trial of a case ; that the collector of revenue will not be a judicial officer also ; that the judicial officer will not also be an executive officer.

HOME RULE means that Indians will manage their own affairs, but foreign and international affairs, like Peace and War, will be managed by a Council of the Commonwealth, to which India will send some of her own men like the other free Nations belonging to it.

HOME RULE means that the C.I.D. will no longer be allowed to meddle with political matters, to harass harmless people ; to terrorize the law-abiding. It will be confined to its legitimate duty of hunting criminals, not patriots.

HOME RULE means that the Police will be the servants of the People, not their masters, will be feared by the bad

citizen not by the good, and will have a pay sufficient to live upon without taking from the poor.

HOME<sub>1</sub> RULE means HOME DEFENCE ; it means that, being free to manage your own land, you will also have to defend and protect your own land. You will not be able to depend upon a foreign Army for safety, but you must maintain your own Citizen Army, and you must keep order within the Motherland, as well as guard her borders.

You will be a Free Nation in a Free Commonwealth. You will be men, not serfs ; citizens, not dependents.

ANNIE BESANT

*President, National Congress, 1917-1918.*

*President, All-India Home Rule League, 1917-1918.*

—8 May 1918, *New India*

## WHAT DOES INDIA WANT?

**[*Dr. Annie Besant's Charter of India's Liberties framed in the hearts of her people*]**

To be free in India, as the Englishman is free in England ;  
To be governed by her own men, freely elected by herself ;

To make and break ministries at her will ;

To carry arms, to have her own army, her own navy, her own volunteers ;

To levy her own taxes, to make her own budgets ;

To educate her own people ;

To irrigate her own lands, to mine her own ores, to mint her own coins ;

To be a Sovereign Nation within her own borders owning the Paramount Power of the Imperial Crown, and sending her sons to the Imperial Council ;

Britain and India hand in hand, but an India free as is her Right.

## **FUNDAMENTAL CIVIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES**

*(The essence of ideas and principles voiced by Dr. Annie Besant in her famous Commonwealth of India Bill, (read in the House of Commons 1925-6) and elsewhere, with the addition of Article D contributed by Dr. George S. Arundale.)*

(A) Every citizen, human and sub-human, shall be represented, directly or indirectly, in governmental councils and assemblages, and his interests protected.

[The Right of Democracy. By Proportional Representation, this Article could be accomplished, a method which with common electorates still ensures that every minority shall have a full percentage representation in all governmental councils, the Council Chamber thus becoming a true mirror of the Nation's every interest.]

(B) Every citizen shall have his say in Government to and only to, the limits of his understanding and capacity to govern.

[The Aristocracy of the Wise fulfilled by Graded Franchise]

(C) Each citizen shall have the duty and the right to contribute to the welfare of the nation.

(D) Every citizen shall be recognized as an integral part of the State with due, simple, and dignified civic ceremonies at appropriate times.

(E) All persons in the Commonwealth shall have the right to free elementary practical education, to medical attention and care, and to self-supporting work, or, if unable to work

for a living, to a minimum subsistence allowance, and such rights shall be enforceable so soon as *finances are available*, and due arrangements shall have been made by the competent authority.

(F) The liberty of a person, his dwelling and property are inviolable, and no person shall be deprived of liberty, nor dwelling, nor shall his property be entered, sequestered, or confiscated, save in accordance with law and by duly constituted Courts of Law.

(G) Freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion are, subject to public order or morality, hereby guaranteed to every person.

(H) The right of free expression of opinion, as well as the right to assemble peaceably and without arms, and to form associations or unions, is hereby guaranteed for purposes not opposed to public order or morality, or the law relating to defamation.

(I) All persons shall have an equal right to the use of roads, Courts of Justice, and all other places of business or resort dedicated to the public, provided they do not disturb public order or disobey any lawful notice issued by a competent authority.

(J) All persons residing within the Commonwealth whether permanently or temporarily are equal before the Law, and no distinction of Court or Judge shall be made between one class of person and another with respect to similar legal matters or offences. Every man shall have the right to a trial by a Jury of his peers.

(K) There shall be no disqualification or disability on the ground only of sex, caste, race, or creed.

(L) Within this Constitution, each unit of government from Village Council or Panchayat upwards shall be self-contained and democratic in all that concerns only itself, the residuary powers to be transferred to the next higher unit, finally resting in the Commonwealth itself. A unit ceases to be so self-contained when its citizens make protest to a higher unit that their constitutional rights are being ignored.

[Dr. Besant's principle of de-centralization with the ultimate unit as the Village Panchayat.

The word "democratic" implies that the executive of each unit shall be responsible to and elected as representatives of the people.

The word "self-contained" implies a return to the public ownership of land, each village controlling the land immediately around it.]

(M) Linguistic Areas should be the bases of the Legislative Assemblies.<sup>1</sup>

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Let us remember that "the East is the parent of Municipalities," and set a world-example. I know that this cannot be perfectly done until we are free from foreign rule; but let us, while we fight for the latter, awaken the souls of our cities.

—23 November 1928, *New India*

<sup>1</sup> "I am glad to see that your proceedings were conducted in Tamil. What will Englishmen think if they have to have a knowledge of German to do political work in their country? In the Supreme Council, you may have a vernacular and a common language, English or Hindi. Your linguistic areas should be the bases of the Legislative Assemblies."

—(Dr. Besant) 21-1-18, *New India*



## THE EVOLUTION OF AN INDIAN SELF-GOVERNMENT

In this pause, wherein internal controversy is silenced, while the thunder of guns rolls over the battle-fields where Nations are at death-grips ; in this hour of waiting, while the destinies of Empires are flung into the scales of War ; we, in India, have time for earnest thinking, for solemn preparation, for that serious constructive work, on which the immediate future of India depends. The Leader [Gopal Krishna Gokhale] whose departure has set our hearts a-bleeding, had his mind set on this problem when he was shadowed by the wings of death. In my last visit to his Poona home, most of the hours of which were spent with him, this was one of the subjects which we discussed. . . . He, too, saw that the present time was apt for such discussion among thinkers, so that when the War was over, India might be ready to take her rightful place in the Empire.

In the West, Democracy has taken on a form which has been shaped in the strife of classes ; and the masses of the people, a true proletariat, landless and ignorant, with no possession save their naked labour, which they must sell or starve, have naturally seen their power in their numbers, and every struggle has been a struggle . . . [which] has ended in an enlarged franchise, a franchise extorted by riot and fear of increasing riot . . . Thus, finally, Democracy voiced its demand as Universal Suffrage, and the elimination of all "fancy franchises" that sought to give weight to aught but numbers, and "one man, one vote" became the watch-word—the counting of heads.

In India, nothing of this kind of struggle has been known in her long history. Village Government she had, and the idea and the capacity for carrying out the idea have never quite disappeared from the village folk. Above the village came the group of ten villages, and the groups of ten villages formed the larger group of 100 villages, and so onwards up to the Council of the King. The political arrangement was not based on voting, but rather on a representation of organic units, linked into an organization for the promotion of general wellbeing, rather than for the possession of power as against others, either for offence or defence. Life and comfort were the objects of the social State rather than power. The first charge on the peasant's harvest was the food for himself and his family until the next harvest came round; the next charge was the seed-corn, requisite for the sowing of that harvest; after that came the claim of the Ruler.

Out of a past so different, a different type of Self-Government may be expected to arise, and nothing would be more unlikely to prove successful than a bestowal on the peasantry of a voting power through which they should decide the fate of Governments.

Here we come to the question which we ought to discuss. Do we want here a replica of English Self-Government, in the form which England, with the wide extension of the suffrage, is discovering to be unworkable? . . . Why should we plunge into this road which will land us, as it has landed England, in a bog? Devolution is an awkward process; evolution is natural and easy. Shall we not try to evolve?

### *The Village*

The village is the unit, and there suffrage may be universal—the fathers and mothers of the village, above the age of 21 years, form a natural electorate, and they elect the Village Council, dealing with village questions, with matters known to all, on which all can form opinions. That the voter should understand, and be capable of forming an opinion on, the questions which his representative is going to decide is a *sine qua non*, if Democracy is to be aught but chaos. The Village Council, the revived, modernized, improved Panchayat, would deal with all matters wherein the village is self-contained—sanitation, hygiene, village cooperation, wells, irrigation, tree-planting, elementary schools—though here comes a link with the outside—workshops, disputes, suits up to a certain value, internal roads, etc. Meanwhile, a knowledge of the three R's, and of some geography—geography of the district, at least—should be necessary for membership in the Village Council, but knowledge of village life and village needs is a more important qualification.

### *The Towns*

In the towns, there should be a group of Ward Councils, in which universal suffrage should equally be the rule, the electors being over the age of 21; and the Ward Councils should be responsible for the smaller matters now so much neglected, elementary schools, scavenging, sanitation, prevention of the adulteration of foodstuffs, street water-standards, troughs for horses and draught-cattle, etc.

### ***District Councils, etc.***

Taluq Boards in the country and Municipalities in the towns below a certain population would be the second grade of Councils, and these should be elected by the first-grade Councils, and by all men and women in the area who had reached a certain standard of education, and had attained a certain age, say 25. They should have charge of secondary and high schools, model farms, technical institutes, markets, electric-power installations, and such part of the administration of roads, lighting, etc. as may be handed over to them by the District Boards, and should form a kind of court of appeal when any wrong or lapse of duty occurred in the Village Councils.

District Boards and Municipalities of towns above a certain population would form Councils of the third grade. These again would be elected by the Councils of the second grade, and by all men and women over the age of 30, who had reached a certain educational standard. Roads, local railways, colleges—including agricultural and technical as well as arts and sciences—the general supervision and fixing of localities for large markets, agricultural and technical shows, etc., the fixing of the proportion of money to be raised by local taxation in each subdivision, would be some of their duties.

### ***Provincial and National Parliaments***

Above these come the Provincial Parliaments to be elected by Councils of the third grade and by all men and women over 35, who have reached a certain educational

standard. The provincial University or Universities, provincial railways, and all the larger concerns of provincial life would come under their administration.

Above these would be the National Parliament, controlling all National affairs, post, railways, army, navy, etc. The electorate there would be the Provincial Parliaments, and men and women over 40, of University or equivalent educational standard.

Thus might complete Self-Government come about, built from below upwards into a secure and stately edifice.

### *The Judiciary*

The administration of Justice is not here dealt with ; the appointment of Judges of all ranks should probably come from above downwards, in order to secure independence of the immediate local authority, always a menace to the Bench. We have seen in the United States the degradation of Justice which has arisen from bringing the Judiciary under popular control.

### *Qualifications and Disqualifications*

The qualifications of members of Councils of each grade should be generally :

- (1) Knowledge—proportionate to the Council, entrance to which is sought, the educational qualification being higher than that of the electors ;
- (2) High moral character ;
- (3) Experience of administration in a lower grade Council, or some public body, large business concern, or equivalent ;
- (4) Age.

Conviction of an offence involving moral turpitude should be a disqualification either for the exercise of the franchise or for membership in a Council. Whether this should be for a term of years, or for life, is a matter for consideration, and might form part of the sentence.

While conviction should be a disqualification, high moral character should be a necessary qualification. It is sometimes said that a man's private life is no concern of the State, and it is true that anything like a moral inquisition is detestable. But a man's neighbours, his community, know his general character, and respect or distrust him according to their knowledge. His bearing among his fellows, his uprightness, his honour, his candour, his magnanimity, all these are known, and win public trust. No amount of anonymous abuse or journalistic malice permanently shake public confidence in a person whose character is unblemished, though they may cause a wave of prejudice. . . . S. Paul once asked as to a Bishop: if a man cannot rule his own household, how should he rule the Church of God?—and the argument is valid. If a man is untrustworthy in his private life, how shall he be trusted in public affairs? A man is a unit, and he cannot be divided into water-tight compartments.

Some experience in administration is needed before large public affairs can be well dealt with. A man must not experiment with public business on a large scale without experience on a smaller.

As regards age, we may tentatively place it at five years above the minimum age of the elector; but it may be that this should not be laid down at all. A wise youngster is

better than an old fool, and minds and souls do not match bodies in their age.

Such is a very rough outline of a scheme, intended only to serve as a basis for discussion. I believe that this question should be brought before all political organizations of this country, and should be thoroughly debated from every point of view. Thus only can a satisfactory and workable plan be arrived at, each stage being taken up and worked out in practice as the foundation for the next. The Village Councils should be instituted at once ; the constitution of the present Taluq Boards should be reformed immediately, and that of District Boards should quickly follow, both being made entirely elective. Then, when the War is over, steps should be taken to establish Provincial Autonomy, and the time for the establishment of a National Parliament fixed.

Dealing only with India, I have not touched on the Imperial Parliament, above all the Self-Governing units, federated into an Empire. The post, army, and navy, spoken of above, would link on to the Imperial organization.

—19 March 1915, *The Commonwealth*

[The above is essentially the basis of what was ten years later drafted by an All-India Committee into a Commonwealth of India Bill.]

## **PREPARING THE FOUNDATIONS**

India must immediately address herself to the preparation needed, and her sons must shoulder local responsibilities which are the practical training for National Self-Government . . . for the foundations must be laid deep and strong for an

edifice which is to be crowned with a National Parliament. England and the Self-Governing Colonies already have these ; we have them partially, feeble and but half alive. Our first task is to supply them where lacking, and to organize them fully, the next to vitalize them where they exist, so that the Legislative Councils and the Provincial Governments may be supplied with all the local information needed for due administrative action by what are really the beginnings of Provincial Parliaments—information as to needs to be supplied, grievances to be redressed, local peculiarities and customs to be taken into account. Only with such effective bodies below it, each efficiently performing its own work, can the central body properly discharge its duties. No longer must Indians look to the Government to initiate and to guide, they must themselves take the initiative and propose the necessary changes, giving the information which will guide the Government in the administration of the central funds, and the co-ordination of the various local bodies.

Now for this preliminary work of preparing the foundations of Self-Government, we must look to the District Conferences already existing. . . . Religious, educational, social, political, workers are all uniting to form one National Movement, a Movement which, gathering force as it proceeds, will gradually become irresistible, absorbing into itself all the highest and best elements to be found in India, including the best in the English official class, who honestly desire to help India to Self-Government. . . . There should be, as the next step, established in each area the four departments of the National work, a department controlling religious endowments, and



adapting their use to the needs of the time, a department controlling educational institutions, a department organizing industries, agriculture, trading associations, local administrative and judicial affairs and reforming social customs, a department dealing with civil and political matters and preparing legislation.

These should form the central fourfold Sabha, working in a defined area—a village, a group of villages, a district, etc. In the fundamental unit, the village, this central Sabha—one Committee with the four sub-committees—should be at once established, *i.e.*, a village should have its Council, its Panchayat—to use the old term—with the four departments, each controlling its share of the local activities, and reporting its detailed work to the Council as a whole, which would assign to each its share of the available funds. Such a Village Council would be able, at any moment, to supply detailed information as to its village, its industries, its education, its roads, its sanitation, its agriculture, its needs, its surplus of any kind. Above this would come a similar Council for a group of villages, which would see to communications between villages, cooperation between them for the sharing of agricultural and other machinery (lighting, grinding, etc.), the breeding of cattle, etc., the gathering of surplus products and their forwarding to a common centre, the supply of necessary materials for industry and agriculture (cotton, silk, manures, etc.); remunerative prices, hospital accommodation, model farm, technical elementary school, and anything else better done by a group than by a village. Next the District Council on the same lines, dealing with all that demands higher intelligence for organization, central

stores for collection and distribution, higher schools, literary and technical; here, probably, would come the supervision of the religious endowments of the whole district, and their administration in the way most conducive to the welfare of the community—its temples, its schools, its poor, all coming within this distribution. Here would be collected and classified all the records concerning the district, ready for the information of the Provincial Parliament, enabling a wise distribution of Provincial funds.

The preliminary machinery for the establishment of these graded Councils should at once be taken in hand, and for the beginning of this we must look to the educated men of the towns, who gather in the District Conference and could map out the District and assign the local workers. The Cooperative Movement may serve as model, for it was started and nourished by these men, and they still initiate each additional centre. These pioneers retire as soon as the village can walk alone, and start a similar organization in another village. One or more such men would, by consultation with the villagers, establish the first Village Council, which later would be elected by the householders. The number would be decided by the amount of work to be done. The next higher unit, the group, would probably be elected by the Village Councils, the next higher by the Group Councils. The outline of this should be discussed and decided by a joint meeting of the District Conferences. Thus would be builded up a graded organization, until the Provincial Parliament is reached, and these are unified by the National Parliament. Thus would Self-Government be established throughout the land, and India would be ready.

to take her place in a Federal Empire, and to send her representatives to the Imperial Parliament. . . .

This organization must be begun in the centre, and spread thence over the Presidency, while the general idea of the territorial organization for Self-Government should be sanctioned by Congress for the whole of India, and committed by it to its District Committees, for the local discussion through their Conferences, allied with the Social and Theosophical.

—10 and 17 April 1914, *The Commonweal*

## WHAT IS A NATION?

*Refuting the constant argument that India is not a nation, Dr. Annie Besant discusses the various factors that are supposed to constitute a Nation, i.e., geographical area, unity of language, unity of religion, unity of race, and demonstrates that Nationhood has its roots in a far deeper source :*

*Geographical area . . . is clearly an exceedingly superficial definition, because the boundaries of the so-called Nations are from time to time changed. Much of the geographical area of a Nation might disappear, and yet the Nation might remain.*

*Unity of Race : . . . Every Nation in the modern world . . . is built of various racial constituents. Other Nations have invaded it, or it has invaded other Nations. In the course of long periods of time and gradually, the various Nations have blended together and have taken on common characteristics. You may, in some ways, look upon races as constituent parts of a Nation. . . . The more constituents that*

have entered into a Nation and blended together, the richer and the greater . . . the whole Nation. [*Dr. Besant then traces the various elements that make up the English Nation and the American Nation, as great in diversification as the various types in India.*] Most certainly it is not necessary to have unity of race in order to have an intense love of country, a strong feeling of patriotism.

*Unity of Language : While emphasizing the importance of a common language, such as Samskrit or Arabic, Dr. Besant points out :*

In America, people talk in the Finnish, Italian, German, and Russian languages. Language need not, therefore, be a great bar to Nationality, if language is taught reasonably ; and if in India it were possible to use one form of writing, then the question of communication would be very easily solved.

*Unity of Religion :* Do religious differences divide India so hopelessly that she cannot be called a Nation ? The antagonism between Hindus and Muhammadans, where it is still unhappily found, is nothing like the antagonism that existed until 1829 between Roman Catholics and Protestants in England and Ireland. When Akbar the Tolerant was ruling in India, he had Hindus as his Commander-in-Chief and Finance Minister. Then Roman Catholics were burning Protestants, and a few years later, Protestants were starving and pressing Roman Catholics to a slow death. I have not heard of such horrors between Hindus and Musalmans.

## *The Roots of Nationhood*

A Nation does not depend on unity of race, unity of language, or unity of religion. It depends on the fact that a Nation, like a man, is the building up of a complicated body which is inhabited by a higher life—a life that is divine. Just as each one of you is a Jivatma—a portion of the Self of Ishvara—that moulds your character, shapes your destiny, and is an impulse for your evolution, so it is with the life of a Nation: a Nation is an individual of a higher order. The spirit of a Nation is a fragment of Ishvara, comes direct from God Himself, and according to the peculiarities embodied in that fragment, are the characteristics of the Nation which is built up thereby. No two individuals are alike, and, similarly, no two Nations are alike. It is the totality of all Nations that builds up Humanity—the human reflection of Ishvara Himself. Each has its own individuality. That which makes the richness of the National Life of India is its marvellous literature, its history, its religion, its science—and all these are so highly evolved because the Nation is so ancient a Nation. During the early life of a Nation, religion is an essential for the binding together of the individuals who make the Nation. India was born, as it were, in the womb of Hinduism, and her body was for long shaped by that religion. Religion is a binding force, and India has had a longer binding together by religion than any other Nation in the world, as she is the oldest of the living Nations.

***The India-to-Be : " Always a Nation at her heart "***

Over and over again, conquest has swept over her, and other religions have now their place here. But India has ever assimilated her conquerors and turned them into Indians, so that a Muhammadan is as proud of his Indian Motherland as a Hindu is. And she shall ever remain herself and not another. No other Nation shall impress its seal upon her ; no other mint shall coin her with its own stamp ; no other religion shall dominate the hearts of her people ; no other philosophy or science shall come to regulate her life or conduct, it shall only come to enrich and not to destroy. That is India's future built up by many trials, strengthened by many struggles, made enduring by many sufferings, by long patience and the overcoming of difficulties, and that India, the Sacred Motherland, shall survive in the future, as she has lived in the<sup>3</sup> past—the mightiest of all the Nations that God has made, and always a Nation at her heart.

—21 February 1917, *New India*

***A LESSON IN COMMONWEALTH  
BUILDING***

To govern a great country like India by a Parliament over here [in England] is practically impossible. It is too clumsy an instrument for the ruling of such people. But if you would build up in India a great Council, composed of the wisest and most thoughtful of her own people ; if you would take the advice of her best administrators in Indian States, her own sons ; if you would place in such a Council her greatest feudatory Chiefs ; if such a Council of all that is wisest and noblest in India were gathered round the Viceroy, who should

hold his post, not as the reward for political service here, but because he knows and understands India, or, still better, appoint as Viceroy a Prince of the Imperial House ; if you would leave him there for a greater space of time and not make him work in a breakneck hurry to get something done ; then there would be a brighter hope on the Indian horizon. This can only be done by understanding Indian feelings and not by ignoring them, by trying to sympathize with Indian customs and not by despising them. Along these lines lies the salvation of India and of England alike, and it is this which I recommend to your most thoughtful consideration.

—Lecture delivered 1902, *Speeches and Writings*  
of Annie Besant

## OUR IDEAL OF EMPIRE .

What shall be our Ideal of Empire ? Shall it not be a Federation of free peoples under One Monarch, a Federation too strong to be attacked, too united to be afraid ? Shall it not exist for the good of the whole world, for the helping of backward peoples, for the spreading of knowledge and happiness, for the upholding of justice, for the protection of the weak ? Shall not all its citizens have the whole Empire for their Motherland, and all its peoples as their family ? Shall not the clamour for Rights be stilled, and the strong voice of Duty be the arbiter alike for peoples and for individuals ? Shall not goodness be encouraged, and evil made difficult ? Shall not all religions be honoured, and none be privileged ? Shall not Righteousness and Wisdom alone hold authority, and Character be the road to Power ?

Let us make such an Ideal our Ideal of Empire, and then shall it bring blessing to the whole world.

—April 1913, *Young Citizen*

## A WORLD CITIZEN

A Theosophist must be a citizen of the world at the same time that he is a citizen of his own country ; he must love all other Nations, he must try to draw them together. . . . He must be a peacemaker outside his Nation and also within it—within the Nation, drawing the communities together into one ; outside the Nation, trying to draw Nations into a Brotherhood, so that there may be no more war, none of the misery through which the world is passing today. Therefore, in your life outside your Nation, do nothing to increase the spirit of hate, even towards those who are our enemies in the physical world today ; remember that they also are our human brothers, separated now by a gulf of blood and of misery ; but love can build bridges across the gulf and look forward to a future where the Nations shall be once more at one. . . . You cannot go wrong in love ; you are sure to go wrong in hate ; hating dulls the intellect and hardens the heart. Take due care that, in this terrible strife, in your struggle also in your own Nation for constitutional liberty, you remember also your duty to Humanity, that you work by love and not by hatred, that you try to raise all and not to degrade any. Let us draw our bonds together, let us approach each other, and not repel each other ; for only thus will the Will of God be done, and the Brotherhood of Humanity be realized in our world.

—1917, *Duties of the Theosophist*



## ARISTOCRATIC SOCIALISM

[Telling a "Fairy Tale" of an Ancient State which was built on the idea that he who had most should sacrifice for those who had least, Dr. Besant puts forth "certain lines of re-organization" which, she modestly states, "are well worthy of consideration and discussion":]

*The Village Unit* : A small area should be the unit of administration—a village, a township, any small area that may be named, so long as it is small.

*The Elders* : The people in that area should have the right to elect those who are to guide ; but only people over a certain age, or with a certain definite experience of life—the "elders" in the old sense of the term. It should be their right to choose those who immediately should guide their little polity, so that the administration of the small area may be always under the control of the people who have to live in it.

*The Head of the Council* of the area should be chosen out of those elected by the people living therein, but chosen by the authority immediately above it. That has not been tried for many thousands of years, but it is a sound system. . . .

### *Ever-Widening Authority*

The whole life of the people as regards agriculture, crafts, amusements, libraries and sanatoriums, should be in the hands of these local councils ; so that the life of the unit in each State should be self-contained to a very great extent. The next area would be the area in which many of these were gathered together into a single organization, say a Province.

All the primary councils would advise the Province Council, and only those would have the right to rule in that larger organization, who had proved themselves good rulers in the smaller organization below—not fresh from ignorance, but partly trained, would be the rulers of this next greater area, and their chief, again selected by the authority next above.

A Parliament of the Nation, which should guide national affairs, would be chosen again only by and from those who had shown themselves efficient in provincial politics. And international affairs I would not give to the ordinary parliament at all, but to the ruler of the State, the Monarch, and to the men old in knowledge and experience, the best of the Nation, who should be round him as his council; to the hands of that body only should international politics be trusted.

### *The Keynote of Statecraft*

The general idea is that each man should have power according to his knowledge and capacity. None should be without some share, but the power that he has should be limited to his knowledge, experience and capacity; and only those should rule the Nation who have won their spurs in good administration of national affairs. In this way, we should restore to the State something of the knowledge that it wants, and we should take away from the State the danger of allowing a mass of ignorant electors—who are really fighting to elect a man who will look after their mines, their drains, their local interest, matters they understand—to upset international arrangements, and possibly plunge us into war—or worse, into dishonour. Those are the general principles

which might be worked out, and might be applied to modern days.

And the keynote is that of my fairy tale : " From every man according to his capacity ; to every man according to his needs."

A democratic Socialism, controlled by majority votes, guided by numbers, can never succeed ; a truly aristocratic Socialism, controlled by duty, guided by wisdom, is the next step upwards in civilization.

## **ARISTOCRATIC DEMOCRACY**

The problem of the moment is how to find the best man, and then to put him in the seat of power. If you say : " What do you mean by best ? " I answer : " I mean the wisest, the most strong-willed, the most resolute, the most unselfish." Those are the qualifications of the Ruler, and without those qualifications in the Ruler, no happiness is possible for the State. . . . I have not heard one reformer in India suggest that power should be given to the illiterate millions of this country. When they talk of " democracy " they mean the rule of the educated class. It is not democracy which they want, though they talk of democracy, but a far more rational system of Government. Whither is real democracy leading the West today ? . . . Is it aught but chaos ? Is it aught but ignorance ? Triumphant numbers having their foolish way, till unorganized force is crushed by organized force. There you see the fruit of making ignorance strong and wisdom weak ; of counting heads, however empty ; of thinking that multiplication of nothing makes something. The nations are trying democracy in the West ;

beware how you try it here. That is not the way of progress ; it is not the way of prosperity.

Now our ideal of Brotherhood applied to Government claims power for the wise and not for the ignorant ; places law-making in the hands of those who understand the complex problems of industry, and not in the hands of those who only know the needs of the household, or perhaps the needs of the town. The people have a right to happiness, but they can never get it for themselves by physical force, by legal violence, and by competition ; they must be guided to it by knowledge, by those who understand . . . When organization is unselfish, instead of selfish, then this labour problem will be solved and not till then. Now how to find the best ? That is the problem. Every one of us who studies must try to solve this problem. . . . But you will not solve it until you realize the hopelessness of the present line of ruling—or not ruling—and accept the Ideal that the best should govern. . . . There lies much of the work of Theosophy where it is dealing with the problems of Government. Oppose all that would level down, but help all that would level up. Do not allow the culture and refinement of ages, gathered by toil and pain, by the long struggles of generations, to be overwhelmed in one mass of ruin by the ignorant and the foolish, as has happened so many times before. . . . To these problems of Government . . . bring the power of a great Ideal . . . It is thought that builds nations as well as individuals ; that which the thinker conceives, that which the prophet declares, that which the poet sings, that becomes the life of a nation, and is worked out in social organization.

—1912, *The Ideals of Theosophy*

## TO STUDENTS :

### *India's Good must Come First !*

I hear that you are being asked to pass a resolution at Youth and at Students' Conferences in favour of the Independence of the Motherland. I most earnestly pray you to leave that question to men and women who are self-dependent and have the right to work for India's Independence, if they decide to take the risk of carrying on such a propaganda, being convinced that it is necessary for the welfare of their country. Many elders, like Deshabandhu C. R. Das, whose patriotism none can deny, regard membership in a Federation of Free and equal Nations as a higher ideal than isolation. But you are not yet in a position to make that choice. You are dependent on your families, many of whom have made great sacrifices to send you and to keep you at School or College. Some have mortgaged their family properties; others stint themselves even in necessities, in order to give you a good education, and they look to you for support to them in their old age.

What right have you, while dependent on others, and as yet inexperienced as to the consequences of hasty political action, to risk the whole future of your life, without any power even to defend yourselves? You are in the condition of pupilage, liable to fines your parents would have to pay, or to expulsion, if your superiors are harsh, thus ruining your future life, your future career, on which your families largely depend. If you are expelled, those who incited you do not help you. When some such students went for help to

Mr. Gandhi he merely told them that they had made a sacrifice. And, after all, what could he do for hundreds?

<sup>1</sup> Study, think, prepare yourselves for your future as citizens of an India that will be free. But do not plunge now into a struggle for which you are unready and, by your condition, unfit.

ANNIE BESANT

•30 January 1929, *New India*

### *To Madras Students :*

To you, Dear Sons and Grandsons, I have a word to say : you love me, I know, and you will listen to me. You have seen a great struggle going on, in which by steadfast persistence in constitutional agitation, your elders have won our release and have given us back to your service. During the last few weeks, you have been growing impatient, naturally enough, for the time seemed long. But I earnestly pray you not to step outside the lines on which we have all been long agreed, nor to rush into action, which is not your duty. As Sir Subramania advised you, memorialize for the withdrawal of Order 559, but do not call outside meetings, for those mean political action, which we all, and you yourselves, have recognized as not students' work. The question of National dress can be arranged without meetings.

India's good must come first, with you as with us. We have serious work to do, preparing for Mr. Montagu's visit, and winning his assent to the proposals of Hindus, Musalmans and all patriotic Indians. Help us in this, by not trying

<sup>1</sup> [For the special preparation of students for political service, see Citizenship.]

to force subsidiary matters, and by thus playing into the hands of those who are opposed to India's freedom. I know you will do this, for this struggle is for the Motherland, and you, the Sons of India, will make her cause your own.

ANNIE BESANT

—22 September 1917, *New India*, (the first issue after her release from internment and arrival in Madras.)

That the masses understood Dr. Besant's idealism, is evidenced by what a poor old woman said when asked why there was a procession in honour of her release: "This old lady has been put in gaol and harassed, but she still says this land belongs to the 'black people.'"

—15 November 1917, *New India*

# INDUSTRY AND ECONOMICS

## ***THE NATION'S PROSPERITY***

That the Government of India should be in Indian hands is all-important, because whatever may be done by other professions and arts for the helping of the greatness of India, it must always be in the hands of the mercantile community, on whom a nation's prosperity must lie. It is especially vital, therefore, to the merchants of India that they should obtain political power before the great problems of peace arise, in which the questions that affect you most, the questions of the natural products of the soil, of their manufactured exports and imports, of the relation between the raw products and manufactures, will have to be dealt with by the merchant community. • For, you must remember that you will be thrown against the strongest mercantile interests in the world, and one great object that they at present have, is, if possible, to make India a place where raw products will be produced which shall be carried out of the country for manufacture elsewhere. That has been long attempted, but it has now been clearly stated to be the object by a very powerful mercantile combination which is forming in London in connection with the merchants here. The idea is that if they can persuade you to allow all the



raw products to be exported and not to trouble you with their manufacture and to make you buy them back from the foreign merchants instead of utilizing your own resources for the prosperity of yourselves and the country, then you will find that India will go downwards among the nations of the world. You must have control over finance. Financial autonomy is absolutely necessary for the welfare and prosperity of the whole country." It is only on you as a mercantile community that the prosperity of the country depends. You cannot separate them from each other. And inasmuch as your community is a religious community, also inasmuch as you desire religious education and realize that the gaining of wealth is one of the three objects of human life as laid down in the Shastras, then you also see that the gaining of wealth is in order that you may be helpers of the Nation and supporters of the people's good, as the stewards of the wealth that you rightly acquire. If then you can help the rest of the country in gaining that political liberty without which the physical liberty is impossible, then in helping yourselves you will be of invaluable service to the country.

There is an awakening of the mercantile community in every part of the country, although in Madras we are in the background because we are dominated by the English trade ; as you know that merchants of Madras are not as independent as merchants in many other parts of India, and many of them who are [thought] to be masters in their business are simply acting as agents of foreign merchants for their enrichment. Taking the whole country, there is an awakening in the mercantile community. This is one of the vital signs which

proves that India as a whole will soon have Home Rule. And if you here in Madura, powerful, wealthy and influential as you are, will throw yourselves on the side of political liberty, so that you may have prosperity for the country, control in your own household, management of your affairs, and if you also favour the National Education which will be an education designed to help the Indians to prosper, to teach them what they need to know, not only to fill the learned professions, as they are called, and the Government Service, but more and more to be able to hold their own in the great commercial competition of the world, then Home Rule on one side and National Education on the other will be like the two wings wherewith the bird rises in the air. Both are wanted and both must be had if India has to come forward. Then the great bird of India will rise high in the atmosphere and will be as it was of old the admiration and splendour of the world. (Cheers.)

—17 April 1918, *New India*

## INDIAN COMMERCE

*In opening the National College of Commerce, Madras, Dr. Besant said :*

It is the belief of those who are working in this movement for National Education that the Indian ideal of civilization is the highest that the world has yet known, that in the recognition of knowledge as greater than wealth you have the proclamation of the true nobility of mind, that when knowledge, wedded to emotion and recognizing the unity of the race, becomes wisdom, then it is that you have enshrined in the civilization the hope of the coming world.

We see breaking down among us in western lands the civilization which is founded essentially on combat. We shall see arising with its leadership in the East the civilization which is founded on unity and not on struggle, which realizes that men are brothers more than they are rivals, that they are helpers more than they are combatants, and that while the law of the struggle of the survival of the fittest is the law of evolution for the brute, the law of self-sacrifice is the law of evolution for the man. It is one of our objects to maintain the great ideal that man becomes more and more human as he becomes a helper and server of his fellow-creatures and his country, that the greatest virtue of human life is to help those who are weaker than yourselves, and that the glory of life lies in service and not in rule. That has always been the ideal in India, and . . . in the past of India that rule has been supreme. . . . Although in India, among its many different forms of Government, you do find "absolute monarchy," yet the word *absolute* is much out of place, because above the monarchy there was always Dharma, the divine law, and that law, if the monarch failed in his duty, destroyed both himself and his house. . . .

In other parts of India, where the monarch was surrounded by a council, those who are represented by the commercial ranks of today were the most numerous among the councillors of the monarch. According to ancient code it was not the Brahmana who ruled; he was the teacher and not the ruler. The direct ruler was the Kshatriya and the majority of his councillors were drawn from the Vaishya caste; and rightly, because in the hands of the council lay the guidance of the State; because it was among those who had to do

with the commercial and industrial welfare of the Nation that the King's councillors were most rightly and naturally found. So, you realize that in the past organization of India you can learn lessons for the organization of today.

In this College of Commerce we shall have growing up, as we hope, not the clerks in government offices, not those who are struggling for that poor and difficult livelihood, but those who are able to guide the commerce and industry of India, so that India shall make her mark among the Nations of the world. By knowledge, careful detailed knowledge alone, can the merchant community take its right place among the Nations of our modern world. They must know the history of the Nations, they must know the theories of the State, they must realize the laws of economics, science, and apply them to their own country. To learn to be great merchants is to master the Science of Nations as regards the supply and demand for all that makes life healthy, happy, and beautiful. It was to the merchant class of old that all the other orders looked for sustenance and help, and their marvellous charity has overflowed the whole of the land and still exists to render fertile the desert places. . . . We may hope that here we shall train up men of whom India will be proud in the future as great leaders in commerce and trade.

If you remember that in the older days no Indian merchant was asked for any receipt, that his word was his bond, that in the banks, nothing like what we have as the legal receipt of modern times was demanded—so high was commercial honour—you will realize that in the commerce of today India has a lesson to teach to the world, to show that the gaining of money does not mean anything unscrupulous, anything

dishonourable, any taking undue advantage of the weaker, for the Indian ideal of commerce was high and noble : it was based upon truth ; it was covered with honesty, clothed in honesty as a garment ; and I hope that the young men who are coming here will bring back the ancient spirit into the struggles of modern life.

Our object then is to give the best that at present can be given to strengthen the eastern civilization and to keep its characteristic features, and for this particular College to help forward above all others the commerce, the industry, the trade, the many occupations on all of which depends the material progress of the country. In doing this it is no selfish work to which our students are called, for it is theirs to show that in all matters that make the greatness of human life, India has more lessons to teach than India has to learn, and progress in her own civilization means the lifting of the civilizations of the world on to a higher level. For India is a supremely spiritual Nation, and, as such, she cannot rise for herself alone ; she must raise up with her the other Nations of the world, so that all must become more spiritual and nobler, because India takes her own place in the forefront of the world's civilization. Much has been lost to the world by the partial submergence of Indian ideals. Ours is to raise those ideals again in the face of the world, so that all may realize how much the Motherland has to give, and how she will enrich the world, even the western world that has impoverished her so sorely.

I would ask you for your sympathy, for kindly thought does much, and in the beginning of a movement, it begins like a tiny seed but hopes to grow into a great banyan tree,

with its branches spread over the whole of the land, with its roots struck deep in the soil and the heart of the Motherland.

—11 July 1918, *New India*

## **WANTED A RADICAL PROGRAMME**

What is wanted is not just a constructive programme, theoretically perfect and comprehensive ; but one which is sufficiently radical to make an appreciable change in the lives of the masses of the people and, at the same time, one for which adequate funds can immediately be found. The Karachi resolution fails in this latter respect ; for the items relating to the Congress economic programme will cost a few hundred crores per year. There has been no adequate thought bestowed on this vital aspect by the framers of the resolution. India will have to depend on increasing her National prosperity, and the tax-paying capacities of her people, if Swarāj is to be made a blessing to the masses. The difficulty of the problem will not only be that the process must of necessity be a gradual one ; but India is a peculiar country in her economic structure. The desperate poverty of her people is an obvious and striking fact. What is not so obvious is that such wealth as there is, is in the hands of a small section which escapes with a light burden of taxation, in comparison with the load imposed on the poor. The readjustment of taxation on an equitable basis will be the biggest problem of the next few years.

—30 July 1931, *New India*

### ***On Taxation***

The whole system of laying taxes on the necessities of life is radically vicious in principle. To tax the necessities of life is to sap the strength and to shorten the life of those men and those women on whose strength and whose life the prosperity of the country depends ; it is to enfeeble the growing generation ; it is to make the children pale and stunted ; it is, in fact, to undermine the constitution of the wealth-producers. To tax food is to tax life itself, instead of taxing incomes ; it is a financial system which is, at once, cruel and suicidal. As a matter of fact, taxes taken off food have not decreased the revenue, and when this policy of taxing food shall have become a thing of the past, then a healthier and more strongly-framed nation will bear with ease all the necessary burdens of the State. Indirect taxation is also bad, because it implies a number of small taxes (some of which are scarcely worth the cost of collecting), and thus necessitates the employment of a numerous staff of officials, whereas one large direct tax would be more easily gathered in.

It is also bad, because with indirect taxation, it is almost impossible for a man to know what he really *does* pay towards the support of the State. It is right and just that every citizen in a free country should consciously contribute to the maintenance of the Government which he has himself placed over him ; but when he knows exactly what he is paying, he will probably think it worth while to examine into the national expenditure, and to insist on a wise economy in the public service. I do not mean the kind of economy which is so relished by Governments, the economy which

dismisses skilled workmen, whose work is needed, while it retains sinecures for personages in high places ; but I mean that just and wise economy which gives good pay for honest work, but which refuses to pay dukes, earls, even princes, for doing nothing. This great problem of fair and equal taxation ought to be thoroughly studied and thought over by every citizen ; few infringements on equal liberty are so fraught with harm and misery as are those which pass almost unnoticed under the head of "collection of the revenue" ; few reforms are so urgently needed as a reform of our financial system, and a fair adjustment of the burdens of taxation. . . .

### *On Land Ownership*

With our great and increasing population it is absolutely necessary that all cultivable land should be under cultivation. To hold uncultivated land which is capable of producing bread and meat is a crime against the State. . . . Then instead of sending the cream of our peasantry abroad, to seek in foreign countries the land which is fenced in from them at home ; instead of driving them to seek from the stranger the work which is denied to them in the country of their birth ; we should keep Englishmen in England to make England strong and rich, and give land to the labour which is starving for work, and labour to the land which is barren for the lack of it. "Land to labour, and labour to land" ought to be our battle-cry, and should be the motto engraved on our shield . . .

Land, like air, and like all other natural gifts, cannot rightly be held as private property. The only property which can



justly be claimed in land is the improvement wrought in the soil. When a man has put labour or money into the land he farms, then he has a right to the advantages which accrue from his toil and from his invested capital. . . . It is the farmers and the labourers who have a right to life-tenancy in the soil, or, more exactly, to a tenancy lasting as long as they continue to improve it. The farmer, whose money is put into the land—the labourer, whose strength enriches the soil—these are the men who ought to be the landowners of England. . . . Sacred rights of property ! But what of the more sacred rights of human life ? The life of the poor is more holy than the property of the rich, and famished men and women more worthy of care than the acres of the nobleman. If these vast estates are fenced in from us by parchment fences, so that we cannot throw them open to labour, so that we cannot make the desert places golden with corn, and rich with sheep and oxen ; if these vast estates are fenced in from us by parchment fences, then I say that the plough must go through the parchment, in order that the people may have bread. . . .

—1883, *Civil and Religious Liberty*

## **THE ANCIENT METHOD OF FAMINE ALLEVIATION**

Everywhere, where a nation lives by agriculture and has to prepare itself for a bad season, it is usual to find out a way of dealing with the natural difficulties suitable to its own spirit. Now that was done in India, and done in a very simple way, although a way that is dead against the modern

“ political economy.” The way was a simple way in the days of ancient Egypt. We have all read of how, when Joseph was the wise minister there, he *provided for the years of famine in the years of plenty*. That one sentence expresses the Indian way of dealing with famines. When there was plenty, large quantities of the food were stored, and rent and taxes were taken in food ; these varied with the food raised by the people, and therefore they never pressed heavily on the people. When there was much raised, the rent and taxes were higher ; when the harvest was bad the king went without his share. But in the years when he got a very large share he stored it in granaries. In addition to that, after the people were fed (and the feeding of the people was the first charge), the people themselves stored the year’s corn, so that if they had a bad year they could fall back on their own corn. In this way the peasant could make head against one bad season, and if there were more than one bad season the prince came to his aid, by throwing his corn on the market at a price which the people could afford to pay.

Now that method of dealing with the famine problem still goes on in some States, such as Kashmir, because they will not permit their grain to be exported. But the greatest pressure is continually being put on the Maharajah of Kashmir to force him to export his rice. He has been able to hold his own so far, but the resistance of English pressure is a terribly difficult thing for an Indian prince, and to resist it continually is not possible. . . . It is far better to . . . save the people from famine, than to insist that the people shall sell their corn in years of plenty and starve in years of scarcity. . . .

And yet in this very year when famine was threatened, I saw not long ago in a newspaper a telegram advising the recurrence of famine in one part of India, and in the same paper that contained that telegram I saw a statement that the first shiploads of Indian wheat had left Bombay. That may be modern political economy, but it is pure idiocy. . . .

Another great cause of these famines is the way in which the land is now held. In the old days there was a common interest in the land between princes and people. Now the nobles, the old class of zamindars, have been turned into landlords, and that is a very different thing from the old way of holding land. Then you have insisted on giving the peasant the right to sell his land, the very last thing that he wants to do, the thing which takes away from him the certainty of food for himself and his children. No peasant in the old days had the right to sell his land, but only, to cultivate it. If he needed to borrow at any time he borrowed on the crop. Now, in order to free the people from debt, they are given the right to sell their mortgaged holdings, and this means the throwing out of an agricultural people on the roads, making them landless, and the holding of the land by money-lenders. . . . You put . . . power in the hands of the money-lender, and you take away from the peasant the shield that always protected him.

The railway system, too, useful as it is, has done an immense amount of harm. It has cleared away the food; it has sent the man with money into the country districts to buy up the produce which he sends abroad, giving the peasant the rupees that he cannot eat instead of the rice and corn that he can eat. Even when I first went to India you

could hardly see a peasant woman without silver bangles on her arms and legs. Now large numbers of peasant women wear none ; these have been sold during these last years of famine, and to sell these is the last sign of poverty for the Indian peasantry. It is no good giving them money in exchange for their food. They do not know how to deal with it.

Another difficulty is . . . all the finer manufactures of India are practically destroyed, whereas the makers used to grow rich by selling these to her wealthy men and to foreign countries. . . . The Indian merchants were forced to give up their trade secrets. . . . In this way the old trades have been gradually killed out, while the arts of India are very rapidly perishing. The arts of India depended on the social condition of the country. The artist in India was not a man who lived by competition. As far as he was concerned he did not trade at all. He was always kept as part of the great household of a noble ; his board, his lodging, his clothing, were all secured to him, and he worked at his leisure and carried out his artistic ideas without difficulty and without struggle. All that class is being killed out in the stress of western competition, and it is not as though something else were put in its place ; the thing itself is destroyed, the whole market is destroyed. Now the pressure is falling on the artisan, and he is utterly unable to guard himself against it, and is falling back into the already well-filled agricultural ranks. . . .

—5 October 1902, *England and India*

## ***THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN INDIA***

I know the suffering that people went through in England, I know what long hours of labour meant : men went to work before their children were out of their beds and did not get back until their children had gone to sleep. Father and children scarcely knew each other and husband and wife never saw each other except by lamplight. The only way we could hold meetings was to go down to the place at 12 o'clock at night and then men wearied after long hours of labour would gather in an open street or even under the snow and there was no hour at which they could gather except the midnight hour when they ought to have been asleep.

It is these things which made the bitterness in England between class and class. It is better in India that these conditions do not arise, better that there is no enmity between class and class, because employers have to deal with labourers who are gentler, far more reasonable than men in the days of the terrible conditions in England. Here they ask so little, they are so easily pacified. Surely then it ought to be possible here to begin the labour movement. You should not go through that terrible time of trouble, starvation and misery that the men went through in England ; you should not have here the conditions that have prevailed in England, you should not make slums like the slums of the manufacturing cities. You should begin on a human level and not on the level of one who would wrench everything from his employee with the resultant bitter resentment that he is starved into unwilling submission.

It is for that we have made a Labour Board trying to bring employers and employees together, because when a dispute begins, bring the men face to face, let them sit round a table, not the employer sitting comfortably on his chair and the men standing outside at the door, but as brothers discussing, as men mutually respecting each other, the difficulties that have arisen. Strike and lockout are both methods of war, they are not means of brotherhood. Very often some sort of explanation will suffice to make friendship where there is danger of quarrel. In England they have come to the conclusion—not everywhere—but the wisest and most thoughtful—that every dispute that arises should be submitted to an arbitration board, that instead of strike, instead of lockout—those outworn weapons of the employers and the employed, they should bring their grievances, put them before men chosen equally on both sides, and one chosen by both sides as the central and final arbiter and then the whole thing should be threshed out and conclusion come to without anger on either side. . . .

The point that I would put to you is : support the men in uniting, advise them and help them to make their union strong. Then they can put their case to the best among them and he can speak to the employer. Instead of an organized mob, you have a definite associated band to represent what the men want. Without unions in every trade it is impossible for the men alone depending on their wages to stand up against their employer, and no good employer dislikes a union. I hope to see here in Madras every trade with its union. As Mr. Wadia can tell you, one of the first things I suggested was a Union in our printing-office,

so that it would be convenient to have the definite wish of the men employed put before us. We have a Union there, and it is so much more comfortable for everyone who does not want to oppress.

You know the fable of the bundle of sticks. Numbers make men strong. You can learn by the lessons that have been learnt in the countries of the West. The other day a great employer of labour put it frankly that he realizes that short labour and good wages were for the employer a condition of success. Let us try to acquaint the people with the elementary conditions of effective and useful labour.

And meanwhile I would earnestly ask you to help your brothers a little so as to prevent starvation during the time which must necessarily be taken up in arbitration. As long as a man is hungry, as long as a woman is starving, as long as children are crying out for food, so long every meal we eat should be bitter in our mouths. We are one people, one blood, brothers and sisters—every one of us no matter what our work may be, what our social rank may be. Those who can sympathize with their brothers are worthy of the best gifts that God can give.

—16 December 1918, *New India*

## SOCIAL LIFE

### ***THE MANU ON THE NEED FOR CHANGE***

It is necessary in the course of evolution that every living religion shall adapt itself to the change of the conditions of the times in which it finds itself. A religion which cannot adapt itself is one whose work is practically over. . . . There is nothing which is clearer and plainer, when we study the history of India, than that from time to time great changes have come over her civilization, that she has been able to assimilate new thought, and new ideas without losing her own fundamental type. . . . In the closing words of the *Institutes of Manu*, . . . the great Law-Giver, conscious of the changes which inevitably would be brought about in the course of millennia, advised that when the times had changed, and those laws were no longer useful for the community, a council of learned men should be gathered together, who should make the changes which were necessary for the welfare of the people. . . .

The difficulty of anyone who speaks about Social Reform today is that it is taken for granted that the present views are orthodox, that they are the traditions and views of Indians coming out of the past, whereas they are really modern, and not orthodox restrictions. In the old times there were continual changes, the Nation suiting itself to the conditions of



the times and not permitting itself to be bound in the fetters which modern ignorance has put around the limbs of modern Hindus.

—Lecture delivered 1914, *The Birth of New India*

We are trying to reinstate some of the old ideals : not blindly, not fanatically, but adjusting them to the needs of the present. It is not everything which was good for the men of the past which would be good for the man of the future. The four divisions of life, for instance, the ashramas, are ever valid ; the celibate student, under training and discipline ; the householder, carrying on the nation's organization in commerce and industry ; the elder, free from household cares, to discharge voluntarily all municipal and national duties, and bring the experience of the household and the office to bear on the business of the State ; the aged, to live in quiet retirement, counsellor at need, the patriarch of the national household, leaving on younger shoulders the burdens of the nation, and not a clog on public life. We do not want slavishly to reproduce the detail of the ashramas in an elder society, but freely to apply the ideal to the conditions of modern life.

—1911

It is on the young men of India that I place my hope for the redemption of the masses of India from ignorance and degradation. . . . When the old idea of duty returns and each knows his duty and does it, then shall we again make the golden age and a happier day shall break upon our earth.

This is what the West is looking for today. It realizes its own turmoil. It realizes its own dislocation. It realizes that

constant struggle cannot be the natural and the fitting state of man. It is gradually despairing of the feasibility of its methods, and is looking elsewhere for light. Where should the light come from? From the East, where the Sun is ever shining, where the laws of the great Law-Giver were given to all his Aryan children, not only to those who settled in India, but to those who wandered westward and lost their way to their father's home. . . . Complicated are the questions of national life, and complicated are the problems to be dealt with. But it is in that ancient Law, in the Sanatana Dharma, that answers to the modern problems are to be found. But remember that, according to Manu Himself, when circumstances change, the old principles are to be adapted to those changed conditions; for which reason customs should be kept flexible, instead of being inflexible as they are in the India of today. . . .

It is your duty as Hindus, as citizens, to help every effort in your midst which is based on the old principles, and try to adapt them to the changed conditions of human life. Stretch out your hand in help to all efforts for human improvement; strengthen those of your fellow citizens whom you find able to guide the young and help the old along the path that combines modern progress with the ancient wisdom.

—1917, *The Ancient Indian Ideal of Duty*

Only the hand of the brother who is on his feet can raise the brother who has fallen, and it must be outstretched without any authority, save the authority of love and wisdom. These alone are mighty to save.

—1918, *Presidential Address, The Theosophical Society*

## TO LIFT THE SUBMERGED

And our beloved Theosophical Society, what of it in the coming year? In my Presidential Address I have tried to sketch in outline the mighty task which is set before it. It has to permeate the mental atmosphere with Theosophical ideas so that in every department of life in the New Civilization, these thoughts may inspire and guide. Education must be recast; penology reformed; labour must be raised from drudgery to creative joy; the submerged in every Nation must no longer remain the disinherited; Society must no longer hold a differing standard in sex morality for men and women. We have studied to no purpose unless we can bring the fruits of our study for the feeding of humanity, and justify our teaching by our lives.

—January 1918, *The Theosophist*

It is not enough that we have learned something of the great Wisdom, and that our own lives are lighted by the glory of that light. It is no true light for us, unless through us it shines out upon the world. And the great evils of the world we must strive to remedy; and if we give the lead the world will follow.

—November 1927, *The Theosophist*

Three things you must remember as guiding principles, when you deal with social matters. Karma must never be forgotten. Reincarnation must never be forgotten. Brotherhood must never be forgotten. Let us apply those principles first to the large numbers of our people here whom we call the submerged classes . . . "Submerged" is my word. I do not like *depressed*; it sounds so dull, so sad, so

miserable. I prefer *submerged*. They are down below the surface of happy society, and we have to lift them up. There lies the first great Indian duty of service. . . .

Every nation from the far-off past has been built upon that mass of suffering humanity. . . . They have fallen because they were built against Brotherhood. . . . What is it that has saved India—India that traded with Babylon, that traded with Persia, that traded with Egypt, that traded with Rome? The one thing that has saved her is that she has never quite lost sight of the great principle of Brotherhood, for, as Manu taught, let the Shudra be the younger son in the household—a member of the family and not outside the family pale. And although India has sinned grievously in this matter, she has not sinned unto death; . . . through many sufferings she has paid the debt of her National Karma, and she has finally expiated the debt by being made the servant of another Nation, and thus has paid to the uttermost the debt that she owed to the karma that she had made. . . .

Now our duty is to lift our submerged brethren on to the level of National Consciousness, so that they may know themselves as part of a living Nation. . . . We look down on these submerged men and women, but we are standing on their shoulders, and they keep us out of the mire in which otherwise our feet would be plunged. . . . Their hands keep our civilization clean by doing all those lower functions which we should have to do for ourselves were it not for them. . . . No class can rise until self-respect begins, and how can a man, always treated with contempt from childhood, respect himself? . . . The higher is responsible for the lower, as the elder brother is responsible for the

bringing up of the younger. These are our younger brothers and sisters. . . . We are more below the Highest than they are below us. We share a common flesh and blood. Shall we not see the Self in the Chandala, and honour the One Life in the embodiment of the Pariah? That is the duty of the Theosophist to the submerged classes—to begin with those he meets in his daily life, to say a kind word, to answer a salute. . . . I would ask you in your personal dealings to introduce the affectionate human factor that teaches a man to respect himself by showing respect first to him. . . . They are brothers—younger brothers, yes, that I grant—but the younger brother is more kindly treated than the elder. If anybody goes short in a household, it is not the baby that goes short—it is always the elders. Apply that to our social life. . . . Respect is the first step, then education, then training in trade or profession, giving them every opportunity of rising. . . .

It all comes back to Brotherhood . . . so long as our younger brothers, so long as our lower classes, are not tenderly cared for, trained and nurtured, so long our Society cannot take its place in the comity of Nations. More is expected from you than from the younger Nations of the West. In a kind of rough-and-tumble way they have claimed their citizenship, but you are an ancient people; you have thousands of years behind you; God expects more from you than He expects from the western Nations, and He is calling on you to take your place as leaders in the civilization of the world. India is destined to take the highest place in the advancing ranks of Nations, and I hope and pray, as I have hoped through all my Theosophical life, that England

and India may go forward hand in hand as the leaders of the highest civilization in the East and West together. I hope that the wisdom of the East may permeate the rougher mind of the West, that the spirituality of the East, no longer dreamy but practical, as it was in the old days of India, may show that the spiritual man is not a sluggard, is not a dreamer, is not a visionary, but is the greatest force in the world for the uplift of Nations\* and for the uplift of man ; and this is because I know something of what India is. I do not pretend to know her thoroughly—for who shall know the Mother of Nations, the Mother of civilizations, with her thousands and tens of thousands of years behind her? But I know her by twenty-three years of loving life among her people. I know her by my own incarnated past, and by the love of India, that makes me reckon nothing worth having in comparison with her service. I know her, I love her, I worship her, as I know and love and worship no other country on the surface of the earth, and therefore I would fain see her what she can be, what she is in reality, what she must be in the lives of the men and women born of her ; and because I believe that Theosophy is but your own Para-Vidya come back to you in a modern phase, therefore I call on every Theosophist—whether a member of The Society or not—to yoke himself to the service of Indian society and put it in the place in which it ought to be—an example, a model, which Vaivasvata Manu gave for the great Aryan Race, and which will be perfected in you, if you will add your ancient knowledge to the modern thought of the world in which we are.

—1917, *The Duties of a Theosophist*

## CASTE

Caste . . . is real as long as you have quality present in the caste, marking it out as distinct, but . . . it becomes unreal the moment quality has disappeared, and you find merely the outside characteristic of birth and not the inner characteristic of qualities. . . . There is no caste, it is written over and over again, unless birth and quality go together. Take the famous passages in the *Mahabharata* with which you must all be familiar, that a Brahmana who shows the qualities of a Shudra is a Shudra and not a Brahmana; that the Shudra who shows the quality of a Brahmana is a Brahmana and not a Shudra. . . .

There was no such thing known in ancient India as caste by itself—Varna. Varna and Ashrama always go together . . . and that is a point more important than you may realize. The Guru had as pupils twice-born boys; he had pupils of the three twice-born castes; they were all his pupils from the time of the giving of the sacred thread. . . . They ate together; no distinction of caste was known while the pupil was in the house of the Guru. . . . So no caste during their boyhood made a dividing line between the pupils of the same Guru. . . . When the boy was to be married . . . began the Grihastha Ashrama, the household life [where] caste was recognized, for children were to be born, and hereditary race to be preserved. . . . When the household life was over, then came the Vanaprastha, where again caste disappeared, and finally Sannyasa, where obviously no caste showed itself. . . . Where children were not concerned, caste was ignored. Even in the household life it was not so rigid as it is now. What does Manu say? You

may take food from the servant of your own house, from your own ploughman ; why ? Because the taking of food in the old days was based on a principle. Where the life was clean, where men and women led a pure and decent life, where you knew your own servant's life and knew it to be well and decently lived, there you could take food from him ; for it is true that the magnetism of the man affects the food, and so has much to do with the building up of a pure body. But in your modern way of having Brahmanas for your cooks, you do not think of his life but of his birth. You would rather take food from a profligate Brahmana than from a decent Shudra. There is no reason nor sense in that ; it is not the old law but a modern prejudice, and where you have prejudice instead of reason, then it is time for a custom to come to an end. . . .

I would rather take food with a man who in his body belongs to a low caste but in his mind is pure, than I would sit down and take food from the hands of one who is nominally pure and whom I know to be stained with ambition, and to be soiled with lack of truth and honour in daily life. . . .

By a slow change in hundreds and thousands of years, the duties of the Caste have been forgotten. The Brahman has sought for power and wealth. The Kshattriya has sought to do the teaching work of the Brahman. The Vaishya has forgotten his duty and has wanted to take up the work of the Kshattriya, and the Shudra has claimed the right to take the duties of the twice-born. No caste is content to do its own duty, but everyone claims to do the duties of everybody else. . . . The beginning of this degradation lies on the caste



that ought to be the noblest, that ought to be the highest, that ought to be the purest, and the degradation began when first the Brahman coveted wealth, and desired physical authority, when he took the wealth that belonged to the Vaishya, the rule that belonged to the Kshattriya, and was dissatisfied with his spiritual knowledge, and was discontented with his spiritual authority. . . . So . . . a confusion of castes has arisen, and with that confusion what Arjuna prophesied—degradation of the nation and the gradual lowering of the whole of the national life. Side by side with that spiritual degradation, there is the maintenance of an outer rigidity which gives privilege without discharge of duty. . . . No man is fully a Brahman unless the Brahman Soul has a Brahman body, and unless the Brahman body has in it the Brahman Soul. . . . —18 and 25 September 1914, *Commonweal*

### ***To Brahmins***

I believe in the reality of Brahmanhood. I who know that there is a Brahman caste in reality, which is a living and working power in human life today, tell you that just because I honour the real Brahman, do I look with sorrow and shame on many a nominal Brahman that I see around me; for, so says the Law, those that cannot teach are not Brahmins. . . . If India is to be helped . . . some few at least must lead the Brahman life, in order to make it possible that the caste may be kept alive for happier times, to serve as the vessels into which spiritual life may hereafter be poured. . . .

You have a choice between two ways of change. . . . There are two ways in which privilege disappears: one when the people, who no longer respect the privilege-holders are

angry with these privileges which outrage their sense of justice ; and if it goes too far, you get a great uprising like the French Revolution and the privileged aristocracy perish by violence and are lost in the midst of the nation. Or you may have the wonderful action of the privileged class in Japan, as privileged as any of the Brahmana caste here, who, called on for their country's sake, stripped off every privilege they held and threw them at the feet of the Motherland, in order that she might become free and great. Their privileges were even greater than the Brahmana privileges here. They might strike down a man in the street who they thought insulted them, striking him down with the sword which they alone might wear. None could say them nay, none could arrest or save ; and yet that warrior caste, proud with the pride of warriors, flung all aside and stepped down amongst the people, content to justify their warrior spirit in the war against Russia, where those very Japanese who had thrown away their privileges showed their Kshattriya spirit, lived on the battle-fields in defence of their country.

Which way will you take, you of the great Brahmana caste ? Will you wait until the surging wave of prejudice and anger, rising higher, higher, and higher, sweeps you all away against your will ? Or will you perform that noblest of all acts—sacrifice your privileges for the sake of freedom, for the sake of the greatness of the Motherland, stretching out your hands to all without exception, and calling on all to share with you in the redemption of the land ?

Oh ! I have had a vision, which I hope is not only a dream, of this mighty caste, which in the past has given to India all that she has of greatest in her literature, in her arts,

of you, the natural leaders of the people by your high education, by your brilliant intelligence, by your power of speech—I have had a vision of your mighty caste going forward to the feet of India, the Mother, taking off the coronet of privilege from your own heads and laying it down in sacrifice at her feet. I have dreamt that this great act of National sacrifice, once accomplished, splendidly performed, India the Mother would stretch out her hand in blessing, and would say to her children who had made the sacrifice: “Go back to your people, and take your rightful place again as leaders still in India. Give to them your splendid intellect, give to them your wonderful eloquence, give to them the power of your past and the influence of your names, crowned no longer with the crown of privilege but with the deathless crown of self-sacrifice.”

That is the vision which I have seen, that the dream which I hope will prove true. Then the Brahmanas, having stepped down, will be raised up by the love of a grateful people, who will follow leaders who are leaders of quality, and not merely by the accident of birth.

—1895, *India*; and 1913, in 27 November 1918, *New India*

**Foreign Travel:** You need the education of foreign travel in order to play your future part in this World-Empire into which you are entering. . . . You cannot grow up to it, if you keep a social organization which is out of touch with the whole of the social order of the civilized world. You have to eat with other people, and you have to meet them on an equal footing; you have to associate with men and women on a footing of social equality. You have to realize that you are a Nation among Nations, and that you cannot

have a social organization apart from all the rest of the civilized world, and separate yourself socially from the people with whom you are to share the direction and the government . . . of the Empire at large.

—18 and 25 September 1914, *Commonweal*

**Intermarriage :** But there is one point I would ask you not to forget when you are dealing with the question of intermarriage. Race is a reality, and you cannot ignore it. . . . Race is important ; it is important in the plant, in the animal, and it is also important in the man ; and you must recognize the law of heredity, although you may say that it is no longer carried out under the name of caste. General avoidance of intermarriage is vital for a Nation's future . . .

There lies before you this path of reform to tread or not as you will. Every Nation is given its opportunity, but none can force it to tread the upward path. You have to modify your caste ; you have to take foreign travel as a matter of course ; you have to educate your women ; you have to educate the masses of your people ; you have to do away with child-marriage. These great reforms you have to bring about. The Nation's life depends on them ; and remember that the Indian Nation does not live for itself alone ; it is a type unique among all the Nations of the world. It knows how to join spirituality to intellect, intellect to physical prosperity, and so to build up the Nation on all sides. . . .

One thing you must remember ; that none outside yourselves can make India what she ought to be. No tongue of a foreigner can build India. It is Indians themselves must build their Nation, and they alone can make India what she ought to be, what she shall be in the days to come. No

Government, no power, no friendship, no amount of eloquence, can make a Nation. It is the men and women of the Nation only who can build it.

—18 and 25 September 1914, *Commonweal*

You see the line of thought : namely, not to abolish but to make real ; not to get rid of, but to reform ; so that, as in the old days, there may be bodies fitted for the incarnation of the higher Souls, parents leading the life of Brahmins, not only in the food and the outer observances of the caste. . . .

Then let learned men come together to take common counsel for the common good, and little by little, step by step, bringing back the Spirit into Indian life and into Indian religion, giving honour where it is due, honouring the Brahmin if he be pure and communicates his spiritual wisdom and is able to teach ; honouring Caste not in its name only but in its reality, not the outer show but the inner life. Thus in the centuries that lie in front of us, shall be undone the evil work that has been done, and the Nation shall be raised as a whole. That is the work that lies before us. That is the work in which I ask you to take me as your helper ; for the life which came from India is given back to India for service, and I sacrifice it to the helping of our race.

—1895, *India*

## WIDOW-REMARRIAGE

In trying to remove an obvious evil, entailing much suffering, an eager reformer is often apt to make changes without considering their bearing on other matters than the one at which he is aiming, and thus, in removing one limited

evil, he brings about others of a more serious and sweeping character. This is especially the case when the reform touches the bases of the social fabric, and where these are concerned, the greatest care and circumspection are needed, lest, in endeavouring to knock off excrescences, we bring down the whole fabric.

In discussing widow-remarriage we must have in view the Hindu ideal of marriage in its bearing on Society, and must consider how far such remarriage would affect wifeness in general, with all that the wife means to the home and the State. . . . Hinduism presents man and woman as complementary halves of a single whole, each supplying what the other lacks. It regards the marriage union as applying to all parts of the nature, and as passing therefore unchanged into the worlds beyond death, unmarred by the loss of the physical body. It considers husband and wife as spiritually one, even as they are physically united, and it fosters so intense a love and devotion in the wife to the husband that the ideal Hindu wife could not dream of a transference of that affection to another. I doubt if any ordinary Hindu wife would tolerate it for a moment. This love to the husband is interwoven with the very fibre of the Hindu woman's life ; it comes out in the plea of Savitri to Yama, by which she victoriously wrested her husband from the noose of death : he had promised her sons ; then he must restore the husband who could alone make that promise effective. Death admitted the cogency of the plea, and restored the husband to the faithful wife. " Mayst thou be as Savitri," must no longer be said to the young wife, if a second man may draw her to his bosom. And surely it is worthy of

consideration whether this intensity of love, with all it implies, is to be eradicated from the hearts of Hindu women, by reducing marriage from a sacrament to a contract.

This closeness and sacredness of family ties may render partly intelligible the horror felt by Hindus—men and women alike, about the idea of widow-marriage. The maiden given in marriage becomes a member of the family to which her husband belongs; she bears children into it and becomes to them an incarnate Goddess, presiding in the sanctuary of the home. The husband dies, but she is still a part of him, daughter of his parents, mother of his children, a stone in the family house; shall she be wrenched out thence to be built into another household, loosening all the other stones, shattering the family altar? . . . It is sacrilege, it is adultery, it makes marriage a commercial contract, a union of bodies only, as well as disintegrating the sacred life of the family, which is the dearest pride of the Hindu. It may be said that this view is not enforced on men; they may remarry. That is so, for the man in remarrying does not dislocate the family, but only brings into it another member. No tie is broken either to ancestors or to children; all remains intact. . . . Nor does it apply to the marriage of virgin-widows, that have been betrothed or wedded in childhood and have never passed into the family circle of the new home. . . .

Many, however, do not advocate the remarriage of widows in general, but only of virgin-widows, and they urge the injustice of shutting out many young girls, many of them mere children, from all the sweetness of wifehood and motherhood. . . . Let us admit to the full that such a lot is generally

sad as compared with that of the happy wife and mother ; but let us see whether widow-remarriage would avert it, or only transfer it to other shoulders.

In this relation we have to face the fact that there are more marriageable women than marriageable men. Boys die in greater numbers than girls. . . . We do not then solve the problem of the sad lot of solitary women by permitting virgin-widows to remarry. Every widow remarried means one unmarried girl the more. We only transfer the solitariness from the widow to the maid.

Secondly, the large number of virgin-widows is due to child-marriage,<sup>1</sup> and the number would be far more wisely checked by preventing premature marriage than by remarrying widows. The higher death-rate among the boys disappears after 14 years of age. . . . This change, necessary if India is not to perish by racial decay, will save large numbers of girls from widowhood, and will abolish child-widowhood entirely.<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, the lot of widows may be changed by making them the willing helpers of their sex, by training them as teachers and as nurses, and by thus making widowhood a consecration to the service of humanity. In the West, tens of thousands of women willingly embrace the celibate life, in

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<sup>1</sup> Since abolished by the Sarda Act which prohibits marriage below the age of fourteen.

<sup>2</sup> Many of the States are very much in advance of us in social matters. In the major States of India . . . child marriage is forbidden. You find that girls must not be married before sixteen, boys not before eighteen, or in some, twenty-one. They are not afraid of the orthodox Hindus as the British Government is.



order to devote themselves to intercessory prayer and meditation, or to serve as nurses of the sick poor, as educators of the young, as guardians of helpless orphans and the friendless aged. How many good works in India are crippled for lack of such a class, and Indian girls are taught, and Indian orphans are cared for, by Christian women, because none of their own faith are available for such charitable duties. Here is a vast field of noble labour, of peaceful and happy usefulness for any Indian widows whose hands are not already filled with helpful service in their own homes. Society cannot exist without the service of self-abnegating women, who are free from immediate personal ties. Widowhood is a call to such service, and lives thus passed have the sweetest consolations for the loss of husband's and of children's love. . . .

I have two women in my mind now, exquisite types of gentle dignity and serenity, with faces divinely pure and compassionate. [But] the lot of the child-widow is hard, as things are. . . . Taking the ordinary run of Hindu girls they are not fit for this selfless life of ministration, and they fret sometimes against the enforced austerity for which they are not ripe. The Hindu ideal of marriage is pitched too high for the modern Hindu, man or woman, and with the failure of marriage, remarriage becomes less disastrous. . . .

It may be asked whether the Hindu type of womanhood is one that it is desirable to spread among Western nations. The answer may bluntly be made that such spreading is impossible. That delicate, gracious, sweet, and tender type, with its gentle courtesy, its serene dignity, could not endure in the rush of western life and the self-assertiveness of western civilization.

One might as well picture Savitri in a divorce court, or Sita suing the cobbler for damages in a libel suit. Leave the Hindu woman untouched by Western thought and do not destroy a type which, just because it is unique, would leave less full by its disappearance the chord of humanity. We have women enough who are brilliantly intellectual and competent ; let us leave unmarred the one type which is the incarnation of spiritual beauty.

—3 June 1896 and 1903, Articles in  
*The Birth of New India*

## **POLYGAMY WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY**

[Ever did Dr. Besant strive for a better understanding between civilizations. Much has been made in the West of the fact that within the Eastern civilization under certain circumstances polygamy is practised. While strongly upholding the glorious Indian ideal of a marriage-tie that exists even beyond death, she yet contrasts the legalized polygamy of the East with the irresponsible polygamy of the West.]

The true and righteous sex-relation between one man and one woman is preached as an ideal in some countries, but is generally practised in none. Islam permits polygamy ; Christendom forbids but winks at it, provided that no legal tie exists with more than one. There is pretended monogamy in the West, but there is really polygamy without responsibility. The "mistress" is cast off when the man is weary of her and sinks gradually to be the "woman of the streets," for the first lover has no responsibility for her future, and she is a hundred times worse off than the sheltered wife and mother in the polygamous home. . . . It is better for a

woman, happier for a woman, more respectable for a woman, to live in . . . polygamy, united to one man only, with the legitimate child in her arms, and surrounded with respect, than to be seduced, cast out into the streets—perhaps with an illegitimate child outside the pale of law—unsheltered and uncared for, to become the victim of any passer-by night after night, rendered incapable of motherhood, despised of all.

It is good for Society that monogamy should be held up as an ideal, for its public recognition as right and the inner shame connected with resort to prostitution are purifying forces; but monogamy is not practised where there is one legal wife and hidden non-legalized sexual relations. The recognized polygamy of the East degrades the social conscience more than the unrecognized polygamy of the West—"hypocrisy is a homage vice pays to virtue"—but the happiness and dignity of the woman suffer less under the first than under the second.

—1912, *Islam in the Light of Theosophy*

## **BRAHMACHARYA**

One of the customs of ancient India which has perished and needs to be re-established is that of Brahmacharya during the student life. In the old days a boy was given into the hands of his teacher, or Guru, when he was from five to seven years old, or sometimes later. From that day forward he lived in his teacher's house, serving him and studying under him, the period of study being nine, eighteen, or thirty-six years, or until he had mastered his studies, and sometimes even lasting throughout the life. . . . During the

whole of this period the student was under the obligation of absolute chastity. Only after he had kept the rule of studentship, had left his teacher, and had returned home, might he marry. It was well recognized that the excitement and pre-occupations inseparable from marriage were destructive of the single-minded devotion to study which is necessary for its due effect on character. . . . Over-early parentage is as ruinous physiologically as it is injurious mentally.

The effects of the modern system of early marriages are visible on every side in India. Her students are tired when they should be in the first flush of vigorous manhood, and at the age when they should be doing their best work—from 40 to 60—they are old men. . . . It is no answer to this to quote individual cases of strength ; it is the slow sinking of the general average which is a Nation's signal flag of national peril. And even where men are strong, there is generally noticeable in them a dislike of exertion, a wish for physical inaction, which speak eloquently of the lack of vitality in the system. . . . Boys who wish to have a healthy, vigorous manhood and a healthy old age, must be Brahma-charins during their student-life. And this does not mean only that they must not marry, but also that they must be pure in thought and act. Secret vice is a thousand-fold worse than premature marriage, and is far more fatal to health. It means lassitude, destruction of nerve and brain-power, disease, and miserable old age. . . . For your own sake, and for India's sake, my young brothers, be pure, be pure.

—1901, *Central Hindu College Magazine*

## THE VALUE OF YOUNG MEN'S ASSOCIATIONS

*[Dr. Besant founded the Young Men's Indian Association in Madras and always took a deep interest in it.]*

In India . . . lads crowd into large towns to attend High Schools and Colleges ; they live where they can, they eat as they can. Crowded in backyards, sometimes in the upper stories of houses of ill-fame, thousands of them live neglected, without any of the nobler influences of home, without opportunities of relaxation and amusement save at the peril of health and morals ; too often they are led astray by those who need them as tools ; their readiness to sacrifice themselves, their eager enthusiasms are played upon, and their noblest feelings are distorted and degraded.

For such lads a Young Men's Association means a helper, a friend, a saviour. It brings them into touch with elder men of high ideals and of pure life, who are still young enough to sympathize, yet old enough to advise ; it places before them good examples of patriotism, of service of the Motherland, of daily self-sacrifice, and stirs them to emulation while insensibly leading them away from evil. It gives them friends who are worthy of confidence, leaders who inspire to enthusiasm, and thus disciplines emotion without chilling it, and trains it to serve, not only to shout. Self-control, courtesy, helpfulness, flourish in such an atmosphere, and unconsciously youthful ambitions are purified and youthful hopes flower into deeds. It is impossible to over-estimate the value of the association with the coming generation of true, brave, and unselfish elders. These youths who will be

the citizens of tomorrow and hold the destiny of India in their hands—these are here, ready, eager, to set their feet on the path of Service. God grant that all who have set their hands to this great work may so inspire them by high example that Madras, and gradually all India, may rise to a noble ideal of patriotism and of public life.

Another side of these Associations is that they offer recreation of an attractive kind in pure surroundings. A gymnasium should always be established as soon as possible, and fitted up with suitable apparatus. Some officer should be found to act as drill-master, and a trained Indian athlete to teach the indigenous exercises in addition to the Western methods; there is nothing so good as the former for developing every muscle in the body and increasing chest capacity; for this, breathing exercises must not be forgotten. At the Central Hindu College we had these exercises in addition to games, and the effect on the health and growth of the boys was striking.

There should be recreation-rooms for suitable games, as well as a reading-room for ephemeral literature and a good library for study and quiet reading. Music should not be forgotten, while lectures and debates should also find their place. . . .

These associations should by no means be confined to students. The young men who have left college or school, who are employed in Government or other offices and banks, clerks who are educated but poor,—all these will find a home in such Associations. The field is wide; the harvest is ripe; many labourers have come forward. All patriotic and wide-minded men, who work for the future, should be

ready to help in the Madras centre, if residents here, or to found and guide similar Associations all over India.

—20 February 1914, *The Commonwealth*

## **WESTERN DRUGS IN EASTERN BODIES**

Religion and the science of medicine were germane, allied, in India. It is perfectly true that along some lines the West has made valuable discoveries in medical science. But . . . those remedies which are suitable for a beef-eating and alcohol-drinking people from many generations are not necessarily suitable for the more delicately shaped and more cleanly fed bodies of eastern peoples. Your heredity is not the heredity of the West. When generation after generation you have, as over there, bodies fed on beef and pork, you get a very different nervous system, a very different kind of muscle and tissue, and the remedies that do for the one are killing for the other. When, for hundreds of years, bodies have been poisoned by all forms of alcohol, these bodies react to drugs very differently from the reaction you get in the eastern body.

If you would only open your eyes, you would see what that curse of Christendom, the drink habit, has done in the East. When the drink habit establishes itself among an eastern people, it ages and kills as it does not age and kill in the West. The bodies are different, the climate is different, Drink is spreading . . . in India. And the result is that the life grows shorter. Men who take up the habit die in what ought to be the flower of their age. . . . Alcohol is a slow poison in the West. But for one of the eastern race, it is a quick poison. . . .

Why cannot you take the western virtues and leave the western vices alone? Some of the virtues which I would wish to see copied very much are virtues which you may very well copy: promptitude, accuracy, the power of controlling the will, punctuality in any work you take up. Those are western virtues, specifically, although they were not always so. Get those. Leave the vices to those who like to have them. Don't think you pick up culture, because you eat flesh and drink intoxicants. You are only ruining yourselves and you are not gaining the respect of anybody else.

—1901, "The Simpler Life," *The Birth of New India*

## **EASTERN AGE-OLD HYGIENE**

Superstition can only be destroyed by knowledge, not by abuse. Theosophy gave that knowledge. It laid stress on the things in religion which were based on natural laws, and so justified very often some old custom that otherwise would have died away. . . . Europe is rediscovering some of these very laws and scientific men are beginning to insist on the careful rules of hygiene and sanitation that our Manu had taught thousands of years ago. . . . Some modern Hindus, not knowing either the ancient scriptures or modern science, scoff at these observances. Why, they say, insist on the Brahmanic superstition that the Brahmana alone should draw water from the village well, and pour it into the village pots brought for filling? And yet an English Inspector travelling through these Provinces said that the custom checked disease, for you could take care of the one vessel and see that it was clean, whereas if any vessel,



brought perhaps from a dirty house, were dipped into the well, the water would be made foul, disease would spread, and health be injured. It is silly to throw away these hygienic rules when Europe is rediscovering them. I know only one man in the West who is as careful as a Brahmana, and he is a doctor. He washes his hands before he eats, and when asked the reason, he answers: "Microbes." Such rules of caring for food-vessels are not superstition; they are good hygiene; we have been blamed for justifying them, but the more you disregard them the more disease will spread. And so with many other customs and ceremonies called superstitions by the ignorant.

—December 1909, The Theosophical Convention

## ***THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN***

It is sometimes said that the position of women in a country marks the level of civilization to which the country has risen; but it seems to me that the position of the child even more marks the state of the community, and that where the children are not carefully nurtured and protected, there the nation cannot expect either the blessing of God or the respect of man. . . . The King is the father of every fatherless child, and the helpless and the suffering look to him for rescue and for compassion. . . . To the strong belong only Duties, to the weak alone belong Rights. Men and women have duties; children and animals have rights in every civilized community—the right to be protected, the right to be guarded, the right to be fed and clothed and shielded. If the tears of the little children, the groans of oppressed animals, if these ascend to God, they rot the

foundation of a State and make hopeless the future of a nation. . . . Well is it written in a great Scripture of the Hindus that it is the sorrow of the weak that undermines the thrones of Kings. . . . Every one of mature age should be a father and a mother to the fatherless and the motherless of the community. . . .

I find cases here of young girls pledged in their girlhood, ere they knew the world, to the ruin of their womanhood in their maturity. . . . For nearly twenty years in this land I have worked and lived in public life and in home life with the educated Indians of the land ; and I know I am speaking for them when I say that this shameful traffic is no part of Hindu civilization, and that Hindus are the first to desire that these little girls should be saved from the degradation that is implied in the word *Devadasis*—servants of God—prostituted to the vilest uses of human passion. It is those who belong to Hinduism who must take this shame away and sweep it from our Indian land. . . . Is it not written that the wife is the Goddess of the household, the Light of the home? Every child who is . . . pledged to shame might be a happy mother, and might be the light of husband and children in some respected Hindu home. Do you say that your own daughters are safe? I tell you that every daughter born of Hindu parents is your child, and you are bound to save and to protect her. . . . Public opinion must speak strongly ; because there are so many matters that laws have to deal with, and unless they are supported by the public voice they are likely to be put aside. . . .

Boys and girls are sent out into the street to beg, not for their own support—though that is sad and shameful enough

—but in order to keep lazy elders, who out of the begging by the children make their miserable livelihood. . . . Take the other cases where little girls, sent out to beg, pass well nigh inevitably into a life of shame. . . . These children when they are taken from the street can only be changed by education and by love. There is not one boy, however turbulent, in whom there is not the instinct of hero-worship which you should utilize for his salvation. If you take a so-called bad boy, shut him up in a house where he has no freedom, give him tasks and punish him when he fails, that boy will grow into a criminal and will be a curse to the community.\* Rather let some of the young among you—young, rich and idle—come forward and enrol yourselves as men who will look after these troublesome boys, who will play with them—and play better than they do—and so become heroes in their sight. Draw out the love of the boy; there is no boy who has no love in his heart. Do not threaten the boy, do not punish him, but coax him and give him prizes, show him things that attract him, and then you will win him back. That is a splendid work, a work which each of you can do ; but the danger is when each of you say : “ It is not my duty ; others will do it.” So long as one child walks the Madras streets, helpless and miserable, so long as one boy causes terror to his neighbourhood, so long it is your duty and mine to bring forward the help that those helpless ones have a right to demand at our hands. It is thus that some of us have learnt the meaning of religion.

It is not religion simply to go to church or mosque or temple. That is good, but it is not the heart of religion. It is religion to help the little children ; it is religion to wipe

away the tears of the sorrowful ; to nurse the sick ; to comfort the afflicted ; to make the world a better and a happier place, because you are living in it. In vain do you mark your foreheads, and in vain you wear the green turban of Mecca, which shows that you have been on pilgrimage to that holy post. The true religion is the serving of the helpless, and thus alone can man testify his faith in the eyes of God and man alike. . . . Sure am I of this, that as you help the helpless, so will stronger help come down to your own homes and lives. Oh ! we are always ready to stretch out empty hands to God and the Angels above us ; but full hands must be stretched out to those below us, otherwise the hands held upwards will ever remain unfilled, the cries unanswered from on high.

—Lecture delivered February 1913,  
*The Birth of New India*

## **KINDNESS TO YOUNGER INDIAN CITIZENS**

I notice . . . the cruel hobbling which is used sometimes in the tying up of animals which are to be prevented from straying from the fields in which they are grazing, the hobbling especially of cattle that are driven along the roads. I do not of course deny . . . that some form of restraint is necessary in order either to keep the animals within due bounds, or in some cases to prevent them from injuring passers-by on the roads. We know well enough here in India that the bull and the cow by the custom of thousands of years have been regarded as sacred animals, and the

result of that is, for the most part, that they wander harmlessly and unfettered through the roads and through the streets. In Benares, where is my oldest Indian home, while walking through those narrow streets, we constantly have to push gently aside some bull that is let loose and that walks along the road taking grain at any shop he passes at his will, for none would deny to the Bull of Mahadeva that nourishment which his hunger craves ; and a strange result is shown there in the feeling of the man to the bull and the bull to the man. A friend of mine was walking along waving carelessly a heavy stick, and a bull put down his head ready to charge. A shop-keeper called out : " Put down the stick, and the bull will not touch you." He at once dropped it and the bull walked quietly by. I mentioned this for a specific reason. The bull in western lands is a dangerous animal and is always kept under restraint ; but here he is allowed to wander freely at his will. Hence, when we see the creatures passing along the road with the head hobbled to the foot, so that every step of the animal is a difficult one, we may assume that generally the animal is dangerous and is thus hobbled for the sake of passers-by. But that is no reason why the hobbling should be cruel, and why every step should be made painful. The creature must be prevented from harming the human beings whom he passes without being practically tortured as he makes his way along the road.

I should like to draw . . . attention . . . to another point. . . . The donkey is an animal which is here very largely used for the carrying of burdens. There are two points with regard to that which it is the duty of every one of us to try

to change : The first is the overloading, which is sometimes so extreme that if you walk behind the animal, generally very small in India, you will see those delicate legs bending under the weight of the burden that is being carried. The second thing is the way of loading. . . . We need some clever person who will invent some way of loading the donkey which will not inflict constant pain ; for if we look we see that the strap, which passes across behind to steady the load, is constantly cutting through the skin into the flesh. If you ask why this is done, you will be told : " Because the load does not balance." Then it is the duty of some inventive person . . . to invent some kind of saddle or pad which will secure the load on the animal's back without mutilating it, as it is practically mutilated at the present time. . . .

In the West and in the East animals are looked upon differently. The Englishman treats his animals exceptionally well—the favourite dog, the favourite cat, and the favourite horse. These are practically members of the Englishman's home. The children play with them—sometimes a little too roughly, and then they are always tenderly rebuked. But many an Indian may say : " Yes, that is all very well, but you eat animals. How can you tell us that you love them ? " That is why I say that we need to try to understand each other. The nations of the West, like the Aryans when they came first to India, are as a rule meat-eating nations, but they are just as tender-hearted to the animals in touch with them as those of the East, who would think it a sin to slay an animal. . . . You will often find an Englishman sitting up all night by a sick horse or dog, nursing it as he would one

of his own race, and trying to keep the life in it and to relieve it from pain. . . . You will find that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is asking . . . for a lethal chamber to be made for the painless killing of pariah dogs. There again you have different lines of thinking, and sometimes they cause great mistake and misjudgment. The Englishman will say : “ The Indian is cruel ; he will not put a suffering animal out of its pain.” The Indian answers : “ You are cruel. What right have you to take away the life that you are not able to give.” These are the differences between the two civilizations, and it is the duty of those who are living side by side to take the best of each and not to misjudge each other. . . .

Take one point which is not unimportant, and here I especially address my English brothers. In these large towns you will very often find that the animals used for draught purposes are miserable skeletons of cattle or they are mere apologies for cattle or horses, drawing their loads painfully along the streets. You say : “ How cruel to underfeed and drive these wretched animals ! ” But I say : “ Yes, but look at the drivers also, and you will often find the ribs of the drivers as visible as those of the bullock or of the horse.” Another point is that the carters are not always responsible for the overloading of the carts ; and if the carters do not take these carts and keep the appointed time for the delivery of the load, they will be dismissed or fined, or punished in some way ;\*so they flog the helpless animals in order that they may not lose the bread for wife and child. I am not saying this in order to stop any action which would check the underfeeding or ill-using. I say this

only in order that you may remember sometimes the pitiful condition of the human beings, and not be too hard on man while you are trying to help the animal. . . .

Education is always better than punishment. Much of the cruelty is thoughtless. I have seen a man thrash a bullock and then, a few minutes afterwards, go up to it, and pat it, and give it food out of his hand. You will never succeed in stopping cruelty in this country, or in any other land, until every member of the community realizes his duty to the animals that serve the community. Understand that to stop cruelty it is not enough to give to the Society Rs. 50 and then feel your conscience clear. It is the daily duty of each of you, whenever you see an act of cruelty, to stop and remonstrate with the man who has done it, and try to persuade him rather than threaten him. . . . If you are threatening, if you hold up the rod of the law, then the brain becomes bewildered and the heart terrified, then the argument and reasoning fail to move the culprit. . . . There is not one person . . . who has it not as a religious and moral duty upon him to stop cruelty wherever he sees it. If you are determined it shall not be, cases of cruelty will no longer be found in this city. The fault is not so much with the ignorant foolish people who strike the animals they are driving. The fault is with us, with you and with me, who see an animal tortured and pass by on the other side, leaving the animal to suffer unregarded and uncared for. The man who is cruel needs to be helped as well as the animal who suffers. It is far worse to inflict cruelty than to suffer it, and the man who tortures is an object of greater compassion even than the tortured animal. Indignation makes



people forget that. But never yet was an evil cured by an evil. If you go in an angry mood yourself to rebuke an angry man, what does he say in his heart? "You are angry, and I am angry, and we use the same means to show the same feeling." But if you go up to him as a friend and brother, if you say to him: "My brother, that animal you are torturing has the same life as you and shares your own nature"; if you plead in this way instead of threatening, if you explain instead of menacing, then you have won a human heart as well as saved an animal, and the man will be tender in the future. Whereas if you attack him, he will strike the animal again when you are out of sight and he is no longer afraid. There lies our path.

In a little Society we Theosophists have for the Protection of Animals, every member takes a pledge every morning that he will stop, or do his best to stop, any act of cruelty towards animals which he sees during the day. It is not necessary to enter a Society in order to make that promise to yourself, and to carry it out. But why should we do it? We should do it not only because there is but One Life, and because that Life is wronged in every animal that is hurt. Not only because those who injure animals are injuring their Lord, but also because the whole level of a community depends on the human qualities that are developed in it; and compassion to the weak and the helpless is the quality that separates the man from the brute. . . .

You can do anything with an animal if you are good to it, anything with an animal if you are kind. If you will not treat it as an infant soul put in your hand to care for, then you have no right to come into touch with this younger

generation who, in the future, will stand where you are standing, and whose evolution you are delaying by cruelty or harshness. With terror you can do nothing either with the child or with the animal; but with love you can do everything. But love means patience, and we are more apt to be irritable than patient.

One other point I will venture to put to you although . . . it is going outside the line of ordinary thinking : Every man has around him a certain protective coating that keeps him safe from the many lives around, which might be hostile to himself. He walks, as it were, angel-guarded as long as he breathes the life of love, the love that is divine and makes all creatures friendly. But if you do a cruel thing to an animal, or slay an animal, you attach that animal to yourself by the link of fear and hatred. The animal cannot by itself do much. One animal's feelings are not much in this great world. You have done more by that act of cruelty ; you have broken through the covering which keeps you safe from the evils around you. You have opened the door by your cruel act, and through that open door all the animal suffering in the world can pierce you ; the one becomes a channel through which the whole can pour into you and affect you for evil. You will not believe it ; I do not suppose most of you will ; but you will remember it, and sometimes you may think of it.

And so I would ask you, friends, . . . to go out as messengers of mercy, as messengers of love. Let every one, man or woman, feel his or her own duty, feel his or her personal responsibility ; if you will check every act of cruelty you see, explain the wickedness of it and the harm it carries with it,

then . . . a year hence . . . your city will have become a city of love instead of one of much preventable suffering, and then you will feel that you are leading the higher life and are channels of mercy and not of suffering to the animal world.

—16 March 1910, *On the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*.

## ***TO HELP THE MISERABLE MYRIADS***

Every competitive civilization has, as its base, a mass of poverty-stricken people on whose bowed-down shoulders the happier classes stand. In England some twenty or more years ago, they formed one-tenth of the population ; that must now, I think, have been diminished by free and compulsory education. In India they form one-sixth of the population, and the country cannot rise into full National life until these are redeemed from their servitude and their disabilities are swept away. Every earlier civilization has perished, dragged down into the waters of the past by the weight of its submerged classes.

—1917, Theosophical Presidential Address

We, who desire that man shall rise and evolve, may be glad that not one of us can be thoroughly healthy, or thoroughly pure, or thoroughly happy, while there is one who is ignorant, one who is miserable, among the myriads who make up the great Brotherhood of men.

—August 1928, *The Theosophist*

If we set before an unprepared soul an ideal so lofty that it does not move him, we check his evolution. If you give to a peasant the ideal of a Brāhmana you are placing before

him an impossible ideal, and the result is that he does nothing. When you tell a man a thing too high for him, the man knows that you have been talking nonsense, for you have commanded him to perform that which he has no power to perform ; your folly has placed before him motives which do not move him. But wise were the teachers of old. They gave the children sugar plums, and later the higher lessons. But we are so clever that we appeal to the lowest sinner by motives which can stir only the highest saint, and thus instead of furthering, we check his evolution. Place your own ideal as high as you can set it. But do not impose your ideal upon your brother, the law of whose growth may be entirely different from yours. Learn the tolerance which helps each man to do in his place what it is good for him to do, and what his nature impels him to do. Leaving him in his place, help him. Learn that tolerance which is repelled by none, however sinful, which sees in every man a divinity working, and stands beside him to help him. Instead of standing off on some high peak of spirituality and preaching a doctrine of self-sacrifice, which is utterly beyond his comprehension, in teaching his young soul, use his higher selfishness to destroy the lower. . . .

Make your aspirations high. They are the germs of powers in your next life. Through ever keeping the ideal high you will grow towards it, and what you long for today you shall be in the days to come. But have the tolerance of knowledge, and the patience which is divine. Each thing in its own place is in its right place. As the higher nature develops you can appeal to the qualities of self-sacrifice, purity, and utter self-devotion, to the will firmly fixed on

God. That is the ideal for the highest to accomplish. Let us climb towards it gradually, lest we fail to reach it at all.

—1899, *Dharma*

There is only one way that men can turn toward God ; there is only one way in which the divine life can expand in us and develop, and that is by loving everything that surrounds us, by helping, and by cherishing everything. Whenever we see a wound, we must try to heal it ; whenever we see a sorrow, we must try to lighten it ; whenever we meet a pain, we must try to stop it ; and if we can take it upon ourselves and set the sufferer free, then indeed the law of love is becoming perfected in us, and we ourselves are beginning to be divine.

—1896, *Against Vivisection*

## INDIAN WOMANHOOD <sup>1</sup>

Where true knowledge is added to inborn devotion, the Indian woman is incomparable.

—1918, *Presidential Address*

On all hands it is admitted that no country can rise high among the Nations of the world, unless its men and its women work together for its uplift ; differences may arise as to the fashion of the cooperation, and various communities have seen the question from different viewpoints ; but that a high type of womanhood is as necessary for the National welfare as a high type of manhood, that is granted on all hands. The position of women in Modern India is abnormal and transitional, due chiefly to the fact that, during the last century, two civilizations have been living side by side in the land, and that the men have, by force of circumstances, been largely moulded by the one, while the women have continued to be shaped by the other. The women continue to be wholly eastern, while the men are largely western, and so the old cooperation is lacking. The man has lost his sympathy in religion with the woman, while the woman has lost her sympathy in public life with the man, leaving both

<sup>1</sup> See also, " The Education of the Indian Girl. "

the poorer for the double loss ; religious life has been narrowed by the loss of intellectuality ; public life has been coarsened by the loss of idealism. India is divided in the forum and in the home ; instead of a double-aspected unity, she has become two separate units, and however loving may be the units, they are twain, not one.

But while the woman remains eastern, she is not eastern of the older type. She has lost her knowledge while retaining her devotion ; she has lost her share in public life while retaining her authority in the home. It is clear from the recent, as well as from the ancient, records of India that the modern woman is a dwarfed and mutilated copy of the ancient model. The ideal women of ancient India were cast in heroic mould. Damayanti was consulted by the ministers and nobles of her husband's kingdom, and appealed to against his folly . . . . . when the king had forgotten his duty ; . . . . . Sita remained fearless, although alone and surrounded by enemies, and, pressed too far to repeated self-justification, went away in quiet dignity ; Gargi faced great Sages in argument, and out-argued the greatest ; Kunti was the brave adviser of her sons ; Gandhari entered a council of warriors and chiefs to rebuke her arrogant son. And they left their successors behind them in the heroic women of Rajputana and Maharashtra ; women who aided their husbands in council, if need be, fought beside them in the field, sat on the gadi as Regents, held the sceptre as Queens. Who has forgotten Tara Bai . . . . . of Thoda, the skilled warrior ; . . . . . and Chand Bibi, . . . . . the defender of Ahmednagar ; . . . . . and Ahalya Bai, . . . . . the peasant-born, the great ruler of Indore, . . . . . the last living on into the

opening nineteenth century, and leaving behind her a flourishing kingdom, admirably administered? It is the coming of "English Education" that has made the gulf, that has dwarfed and exiled the woman from fullness of life, and has hardened and rendered less effective and less patriotic the man. For woman is man's inspirer to greatness, and sacrifices acceptable to the Gods cannot be rendered where she is not.

For India's uplift, then, her daughters must come out from their seclusion, and take back their place in the common life, out of which they have slipped during the last century, to the sore detriment of the Motherland. They do not need to copy the western women, forced by economic conditions to become man's rivals in the struggle for existence, to the great injury of the children born of them, whose vitality is lessened by ante-natal hardships . . . But neither man nor woman should be artificially restricted; each should unfold their respective capacities to the full, nor be shut out of any field by law or custom. What a human being *can* do, that he *may* do, provided that he injures none.

Woman must be educated; that is her fundamental need; the treasures of philosophy, literature, science, art, must be thrown open to her as to man. There should be no store-houses of knowledge, locked by the key of sex. The Woman Sage is wanted as well as the Woman Saint, and women's wisdom as well as men's is needed to dig deeply and build strongly the foundations of the New India, the India of the Free. For her, Religion must be philosophic and scientific, and Science must again become the handmaid of Religion.



She will apply to practice the truths she learns far better than men are applying them, for she is the born administrator as man is the born legislator.

The tendency of women to put into practice the truths she has learned is one of her marked characteristics. She is less of a theorist than is man, and is far more practical. Her instinct is to apply knowledge to conduct, rather than to remain content with it as an intellectual possession. And in this application she is not daunted either by difficulties or by the necessity of making sacrifices. Sacrifice is so essentially a part of her daily life as a wife, a mother, a mistress of her household, that she does not calculate it as does a man. It comes to her by habit, and the good of her unit, the family, so dominates her mind that it never strikes her to put her individual comfort in conflict with her devotion to those she loves. When that is extended to the country, when she makes the larger interests her own, the same characteristic comes out.

During the patriotic resistance of Bengal to the ill-advised Partition sprung upon it by Lord Curzon—now happily undone by the gracious act of the "King-Emperor—the women of Bengal took a very active part, and one of their manifestations shews this characteristic very forcibly. The brother of Swami Vivekananda, the Editor of the *Yugantar*, was sent to prison. There was a large gathering of Bengal ladies to shew sympathy with his mother, and their sympathy took the form not of condolence, but of congratulation.

Few realize the immense strength now latent in Indian Womanhood, ready to be aroused when they again interest themselves in public life. The agitation in Bengal against the

Partition would very likely have died down, had it not been for the women, for the mothers. The Bengali and the Maharashtra women are the most highly-educated women in India—not always in reading and writing, though these also are more general than elsewhere, but in that true culture which grows out of a knowledge of literature, and out of that, inevitably, National pride. India's uplift will come speedily, when her daughters put to it their delicate, but strong, hands.

For India's uplift, the woman must have an open field, unfettered hands, and unimpeded activity. The two sexes were not evolved that one should enslave the other, but that they should utilize for fuller life the differences which pertain to sex. Womanhood as well as manhood must be consecrate to the Motherland, for in their union lie the strength, the stability, the freedom of India.

—16 July 1915, *New India*

## ***THE RESURRECTION OF INDIAN WOMEN***

In discussing the question of the position of Indian women, it is sometimes, indeed generally, forgotten that their exclusion from the life of the Nation as such, and their confinement to home interests, are of very modern growth in India. We need not go back to the far-off days of Savitri, in order to prove that a girl might wander about outside her home, and might fall in love before her parents had chosen her future husband. Nor to the time of Damayanti to show that a maiden might select her own husband. . . . We have heard of

these so often that they scarcely now make any impression on our minds. When we read that of old two paths were open to the woman as to the man, the path of Brahmacharya and the knowledge of Brahman, and the path of the householder, of the wife and mother, it affects us not—it was so long ago.

But there is no break in the glorious history of Indian womanhood down to the time when English education made a new culture for the man in which the woman did not share, carrying him away from her into a new world of interests from which she was shut out. Indian history is studded with the names of Indian women who were warriors, queens, rulers, patriots, scholars. The names of Padmavati of Chitor, the gallant wife of Bhimsi, of Mirabai, the poetess of Marwar and Mewar, . . . do not these shine out as stars in India's sky? They lived and died for the Motherland, and saw naught unwomanly in any service which she needed and which they could render.

Gradually the woman was pushed out of her place in India's life save as mother, as wife, as head of her household. Within the house none has disputed her sovereignty, but she ceased to be the counsellor of her husband in his public life and national interests; thus has the whole country been the loser, for woman's viewpoint is not identical with that of the man, but differs as the two eyes differ. . . . The axes of vision are different though correlated, and make for fuller vision than one eye can compass by itself. . . . The Nation with one eye blinded cannot see nor judge aright. Man and woman are not identical, but the one is the complement of the other as the two eyes of the human being, the two

wings of the bird. National life is impoverished, is crippled, deprived of its feminine element.

But of late there has been an awakening of women, touched by the wide sweep of National consciousness, and feeling their modern exclusion from all humanity outside the home. The wrongs wrought in South Africa on Indians brought the Indian women there to face, as of old, the dangers which were faced by their men. Women went to gaol as men went, aye and died from the hardships suffered. Then women in the Motherland arose, stung into action by the sufferings of the exiles, and women's meetings called for justice, so that men and women together marched in one army against wrong—and won. The degradation, foul and monstrous, inflicted on Indian women in Fiji as indentured labourers, called on their sisters in the Motherland for help; again they moved, sent a deputation to the Viceroy, and succeeded in gaining a promise that indentured slavery should cease. A third great victory was won in the internment struggle—nine women's meetings and women's processions played a remarkable part in the agitation.

Meanwhile efforts to win higher education were steadily carried on, and progress was made. Qualified women teachers, women doctors, began to appear. Handicapped by the evil custom of child marriage and child motherhood, women yet strove for education, and Mr. Karve's bold stand for widow education, widow marriage, finally for a Woman's University, played a fine part in the struggle. Girl undergraduates and graduates attended Government Universities and distinguished themselves in the examinations. A woman poet, Sarojini Devi, showed an easy mastery of English

melody that no masculine Indian has rivalled. Toru Dutt might have held her own had not death cut short her promise. Shrimati Sarojini's rare eloquence alike in English and in Urdu is making her a power in the political field of India.

Everywhere, as we look around us, we see the glorious arising of Indian Womanhood, the promise of a near and sure victory for Liberty. For Woman is the Shakti, the Divine Power, and, without her, Man cannot reach the fullness of Life. Partner, not subject ; comrade, not rival ; complement, not antagonist ; helper, not burden—such is Woman to Man. With her Freedom, India shall become free. The subjection of the Motherland and of the Mother must end together. For Man and Woman are the halves of a Perfect Whole, and by their united strength shall India enter into her Kingdom.

—22 February 1919, *New India*

## **THE SHAKTI**

No Nation is made of men alone. The wives of a Nation give courage to their husbands, the mothers of a Nation train the generation that will inherit our work in freedom, in self-respect, in nobility of character. No bird can fly with one wing : no Nation can rise with only one sex taking part in the National life. We are not identical, we have differences, but in the differences, complementary and not antagonistic, lies the perfection of humanity. . . .

It is quite natural that here, in India, women should advance beside their men, for India has had many capable

women Indian Rulers, sometimes in their own right, sometimes as Regents for their minor sons, and this has continued down to our own time. . . .

There is no Deva without his Devi. You cannot have the spirit without the matter which it inspires and which embodies it. . . .

Moreover, from the Hindu point of view, the Shakti, the active Power of God, is feminine, and in all troubles and distresses all the Shining Ones cry to the Shakti for deliverance, and where the masculine fails, the feminine triumphs, and drives away the Evil, and restores the throne to Good. . . . And the woman is Her Representative on earth, the Mother, holiest and sweetest of names. . . .

The Shakti is the true power of Deva and in the help of the representatives of the Shakti will lie the certain triumph of India in the Nation and in the Indian home ; and so it is that we go forward full of courage.

—27 September 1917, *New India* and  
September 1918, *Theosophist*

# RELIGION <sup>1</sup>

## **A REGENERATING ENERGY**

To whatever land we may go, through whatever country we may pass, we have still Humanity as "the great orphan" crying for the Spirit, striving after Light, after spiritual unity, striving to find in the many exoteric religions the one Spiritual Truth which alone can satisfy the soul. . . . In this land there is more hope of a spiritual revival, and if a spiritual revival here there may be, then it will pour outwards to all the four corners of the world. For spirituality is more easily awakened in India than elsewhere. The spiritual heart here is only sleeping, whereas in some other lands it has scarcely yet come to birth ; for you must remember that in this land is the birthplace of every religion, and that from India outwards, religions have made their way. Therefore it is that the soul of our Mother India is so important for the future of the world, and therefore it is that the materialism of India is so fatal. For it is here alone that lies the hope that man has been looking for spiritual life ; for, in truth, unless the life of the Spirit come in this land, by reviving here, then the hope is baseless that spirituality is to spread over the world. . . . If you cannot revive spirituality in India through *Hinduism*, if you cannot thus reach

<sup>1</sup> See also Religious Education.

India, then there is nothing else you can hope to do. . . . If this shall again become a living thing, India shall herself live ; and, with the revival, all the sleeping truths of other religions shall look again towards their Indian Mother, and make her once again the spiritual teacher of the world. . . .

There is one thing that is eating the heart out of India, and that is modern materialism. There is one thing which is poisoning the mind of India, and that is the kind of science which is the teacher of materialism and works against Spirituality in the mind. How should I be able to tell you of the moral regeneration of India unless first I can strike at that which is piercing her heart and sucking out her very life-blood. So, as I have been trained in the science of the West, trained in the knowledge of the physical Universe, which is so much used to make men believe that nothing but the physical remains—, I take for my first subject, this undermining of materialism by science, and I attack it with the weapons that were once used to build it up. . . .

It is from the Supreme Will that forms emanate and build the Universe. And you may understand that this power of the Supreme is more manifest in the power of the mind than the powers of the body, and that true activity is shown not in running about from place to place, held in the bonds of physical facts, but in quiet thinking, in the use of the imagination and the will. Therefore the Yogi sitting apart, with body absolutely still, with eyes closed, and mouth not communicating with other men, if he be a Yogi indeed, a Yogi in heart not only in dress, he has an inner life, a spiritual life, and he may do more than the man of action by his thoughts, by his meditations, by the forces which are going



out from him. On these more than on the work of politicians may turn the life of the nation.

Nor is this work only for the Yogi. Every one of you is sending out thoughts that, passing into the astral atmosphere, will take form, and thence affect the lives of men and in their totality the Nation's future. If only every one of you would give one brief quarter of an hour's thought each morning to the future of India, and send out earnest wishes for her welfare, hopes for her revival, aspirations for her spiritual greatness, believe me you would make a force that would raise the nation and would mould her future. Your thoughts would gather together, modelling, as it were, an ideal India that should take shape in the external world ; your prayers would gather together and ascend to the Feet of Mahâdeva, whence would flow forth a regenerating energy that would manifest itself in teachers, in leaders, in guides of the people, who could move the hearts of men, and unite them into one mighty Unity. Such is your power over the future, such the service you may render India, for in thought is the power of the Supreme, and it is man's, because "Thou art Brahman."

—1895, *Materialism Undermined by Science*

### **"FAITH-FORMED—THIS MAN"**

An ideal is a fixed idea ; it is created by the mind ; it is nourished by desire ; it presses ever outwardly into the world of manifestation, seeking to express itself in action.

"Faith-formed—this man ;

Whatever faith, that even he."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A literal translation of Bhagavad-Gita, XVII, 3.

Inasmuch as the religious ideal is that which comes closest to the heart and most dominates the brain, the bearing of the religious ideals of citizens on the Society in which they live cannot safely be disregarded by those who guide such Societies.

### *The Ideal of India*

In ancient India the central thought was the Family—the man, the woman, the child, Dharma . . . mutual obligation. . . . On Duties were built up social systems in which each had his place, his work, his map of life.

### *The Ideals of Christianity*

- (1) The Value of the Individual.
- (2) Self-sacrifice.

The apotheosis of the Individual is seen in the assertion of the Rights of Man, and the necessary corollary of a competitive Society. . . . Is it, then, ill with the world? Is this cockpit civilization the result of the teaching of the Gentlest, the most Compassionate, of the 'Lover of men? Nay . . . for the second ideal . . . is that of Self-sacrifice. . . . "He that is greater among you, let him become as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve," the Ideal of yoking strength to Service, of recognizing the measure of power as the measure of responsibility, of the joy and the glory of voluntary renunciation. That is the Ideal to which the younger generation of the wealthy and the highly placed is stretching out hands aching to serve, is offering up hearts aflame with passionate devotion to man.

## *The Basis for Society*

For social reconstruction . . . we cannot rely . . . only on the generous impulses of the noblest and most spiritual men and women. It is necessary that all people should feel that a law exists, accord with which means happiness, and disregard of which brings ruin—slowly or swiftly, but inevitably. . . .

What religious Ideals then, are there which may serve as a basis for Society, and may be seen as rooted in natural law, unchangeable and inviolable?

### (I) THE ONE LIFE

We must realize that we all share a common Life, are rooted in that Life, so that nothing that injures another can be permanently good for any one of us.

## *Seven Grades of Individuals*

1. Cellular lives.
2. Cells joined together into Tissues.
3. Tissues joined together into Organs.
4. Organs joined together into Bodies. •
5. Bodies joined together into Communities.
6. Communities joined together into Nations.
7. Nations joined together into Humanity.

The health of the whole must depend on the health of the parts. . . . Hence any scheme of social reconstruction that is to endure must be based on the practical recognition of a common Life in which all are sharers. . . . Until we regard all the elders as our parents, the contemporaries as our

brothers and sisters, the youngers as our children, we have not really risen to the *human* point of view at all. . . .

As this truth becomes generally recognized, all who suffer will have an indefeasible claim on all who are able to help, by the mere fact of their suffering. We shall live out the exquisite words of that gem of literature, *The Voice of the Silence*, given to us by H. P. Blavatsky :

*" Let not the fierce sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye. But let each burning tear drop on thy heart and there remain ; nor ever brush it off until the pain that caused it is removed."*

All must have their share of happy life.

Without this, Society perishes.

The law of the common Life, the expression of which is Brotherhood is woven into the very substance of the human race. . . . *Where Brotherhood is ignored, it breaks that which ignores it. . . .*

## (II) SACRIFICE

Another religious Ideal, needed especially for the actual work of Social Reconstruction, is the joy and glory of Sacrifice. This again is beautifully seen in the family. No compulsion is there needed. Where food goes short, the youngest children are the first to be fed. . . . Sacrifice is seen not to be sorrow, but a healthy instinct of the true human heart, and wherever it meets weakness there comes the impulse to serve. . . .

Until the people are happy, we have no right to talk of " Society " ; there is only a weltering chaos of social units, with no social organization. . . .

“ From each according to his capacity ;  
To each according to his needs.”

That is the Law of the Family, and one day it will be the true social law. As the truth of reincarnation becomes accepted once more, the duty of the elders to the younger, the claim of the younger on the elders, will be recognized ; help, protection and training will be gladly rendered by the elders ; and the evolution of the younger will be quickened.

### *The Spiritual Sight*

This can only come about by religious effort and the religious spirit. Not out of the Ideal of material prosperity but out of the religious Ideal must spring the Sacrifice that is joy, because it is the conscious expression of the common life ; only out of the religious Ideal can come the Brotherhood which exists in all its splendour in the spiritual world, and, in time, shall surely spread to us in this mortal sphere. It is the spiritual sight which is the true vision. . . . That spiritual consciousness always speaks for Unity, for Brotherhood, for Service and for Sacrifice ; as it unfolds, it will bring the materials for a nobler social State.

### *The New Law of Life*

The Immanence of God ; the duty of the strong to serve and to protect ; the linking together of power and responsibility ; the realization that the higher and stronger should put forward no rights—that rights belong to the weaker and the more helpless ; these Ideals, as they are recognized, will regenerate Society ; and will stimulate the noblest emotions of the human heart to love, to help, and to serve.

There will be no need of confiscatory legislation ; for the heart full of love will be the law of life ; it will be a question of giving not of taking, of voluntary help not of compelled drudgery. Then will the danger of warfare pass away, and peace, which is the fruit of love, will spread over the lands. In the unity realized by religion, the apparently conflicting interests of men on the material plane will disappear, and as the Spirit of Love dominates, the discords caused by hatred will pass away.

—1916, *The Bearing of Religious Ideals on Social Reconstruction*

## THE GIFT OF THE EAST

### *Three Great Ideals*

I. The world is under a *divine governance*, invisible worlds mingle in the affairs of men, with the inevitable corollary of "the ideal of the responsibility of the rulers for the ruled."

II. The Ideal of *Duty or Dharma* rather than Rights or Privileges dominating each man in his respective sphere of activity, with the corollary of the *relativity of morality*.

III. *Simplicity and Renunciation*—hence *Comradeship* : "That simplicity of material life which lays stress on knowledge, character, service, instead of on wealth," and hence brings about "a recognition of a common human life" and, through likeness of daily life and refinement, a comradeship between rich and poor, class and class.

Dr. Besant sees a true aristocracy as "the custodian of stately manners, dignified bearing, artistic culture, simple or

splendid living, according to the seemliness of the occasion, the ever-present example of 'good taste.' "

### ***The Destinies of Nations***

A Nation that would fill a mighty part in the near future must

*Build up her sons and daughters on heroic models*

By placing righteousness above luxury, thought above enjoyment,

By choosing the strenuous, the heroic, the self-sacrificing in daily life, and not petty enjoyments, small luxuries, and miserable sensual gratifications.

If our nation is to achieve its destiny as *the servant of humanity at large*,

We must cultivate the soil of character and plant the sound roots of noble, righteous, simple living.

—*The East and the West*

### ***LISTEN, BROTHERS! LET US THINK ABOUT TRUTH***

It is said in the Veda: "BRAHMAN is TRUTH." Now you know that your life, the life of your body by which you move about, by which you hear, see, smell, taste, touch, is part of the life of Brahman, it is Divine Life, by whatever name you worship God. He is everywhere, in everything, and so is in you. The life of your feelings, by which you enjoy and suffer, by which you are happy and miserable, by which you love your father and mother, your brother and sister, your wife and child, your friends, is part of that same

life of Brahman. The life of your mind, by which you think, and remember, and judge, and direct your actions, is part of that same life of Brahman.

It follows from this, that if your life is part of that larger life, the one life, and if that life is Truth, you must be true in your body, your feelings, your mind. You must act truth, you must feel truth, you must think truth, in one phrase, you must LIVE TRUTH.

This is what your forefathers did. You remember how Harischandra gave up his kingdom, let himself, his wife and his child be sold into slavery, became the keeper of a burning-ghat, and would not even take his owner's wood to burn the dead body of his son, because he would not forsake Truth, by breaking his promise.

You remember how King Bali, having promised the Divine Dwarf—not knowing him to be Divine—the ground he could cover with three steps, seeing two steps cover earth and sky, offered his own breast for the third, and refused to break his promise even though commended to break it by his Guru.

You remember how Shri Krishna raised from the dead a child, using the Power of Truth to revive it, the command coming from lips which “had never spoken a lie, even in jest.”

By Truth, we can conquer everything: “Truth alone prevails, not falsehood,” it is written. Truth is Fearlessness; Truth is strength; Truth is Fortitude; Truth is Endurance; Truth is Patience; Truth is Might. Where Truth is, there is Victory.

Ancient history tells us that Indians were, of old, remarkable for their truthfulness; in the eighteenth century, the



same thing was remarked by an Englishman, Colonel Philpotts. Truth has been the National characteristic from time immemorial, and therefore invasion and conquest and foreign rule have not been able to destroy the National life of India. So long as Truth remains in the life of a Nation, that Nation cannot be destroyed, for the Eternal Life dwells therein. . . .

Let everyone who reads this make up his mind to follow Truth at all hazards, no matter whither she may lead them. Let Truth be our spear and sword, Truth our shield and armour. Though she slay us, yet let us trust in her. She will crown us with victory in the end. By Truth we shall win Home Rule.

ANNIE BESANT

*President, National Congress, 1917-1918.*

*President, All-India Home Rule League, 1917-1918.*

—2 May 1918, *New India*

## OUR SPECIAL RELIGIOUS DUTY

The special work that we have to do for Religion . . . is to proclaim with all the energy that we can the unity of religions, to live it as well as to speak it ; for what is true Religion, of which all religions are only the outer forms ? It is the realization of the Oneness ; that we are one with God, and therefore we are one with every child of God, with every son of man. That is our special religious duty today : not only to say it, but to live it ; not only to talk about it, but to practise it ; that the Hindu and the Musalman shall join hands as sons of a common Father ; that the Brāhmana and the Pariah shall join hands as sons of one God ; that whatever we have of larger possessions, whether it be of

knowledge or of anything else, we shall share them with those who are poorest in the things of which we have the most ; to realize that Brotherhood does not only go upwards seeking equality with our superiors, but it goes downwards to lift up our inferiors until they stand on the same level as that on which we stand ourselves. That, then, is our great duty—the unity of all religions, the unity of men.

The last duty that I want to lay stress upon is one which is essentially Hindu, but has been in modern days forgotten : namely, that there is nothing, nothing in all our activities, which can be separated from religion. It was said of the old Hindu that he slept religion, ate religion, thought religion, lived religion. . . . That is true, and that must come back, not only to the Hindu but to every religious mind. In the West they have a Sunday—the “ Lord’s Day ” : one day in the week belongs to the Lord, and to whom do all the other days belong ? “ This book is sacred, and all the others profane ; this thing is religious, everything else is secular.” To believe and to live that, is to eat the heart out of every human activity. If in God we live, move, and have our being, if God dwells in your heart and in mine, what can you and I do that is not divine activity, and that ought not to be penetrated by the spirit of Religion ? You are religious in the temple ; you must be religious in the market-place. You are religious in the puja room ; you must be religious in the court : as vakil, pleading ; as judge, giving judgment ; as doctor, healing ; as soldier, fighting ; as merchant, trading. You must be religious right through, or else you have no true religion. Nothing is outside Religion. They say : “ Mrs. Besant is a religious teacher ; she must have nothing

to do with politics." But I assure you that just because Mrs. Besant is a religious teacher, therefore she has everything to do with politics.

—December 1916, Theosophical Convention.

## ***RELIGION AND PATRIOTISM, TWIN-SISTERS***

Only during the last centuries have Patriotism and Religion been divided, by the claim of one religion—first the Christian, then the Muhammadan—to be world-embracing. Disregarding all national boundaries, these religions built walls which were not coterminous with the limits of the nations, and violently wrenched apart the twin-sisters who had dwelt so long in peace within each national area. With this claim of uniqueness and universality has arisen the fierce spirit of bigotry and fanaticism, until the Indian Muhammadan feels more akin to his brother Muslim of Turkey than to his Indian-born brother who is a Hindu, and the Indian Christian feels more patriotism for Christian England than for Hindu and Muhammadan India. This is the real difficulty ; we have a Pan-Islam and a Pan-Christendom, dragging Indians away from India, and making the centre of their life extra-national. Thus are religions made agents for national disruption, and religious exclusiveness destroys love of country. It is the exclusiveness that is the enemy, and not Religion. Therefore must the warring religions learn their unity, and when they feel themselves to be one, they will strengthen, not weaken. Patriotism.

The lesson will be learned in India first, and through India in the world, because here alone are all the great religions

found living side by side.<sup>1</sup> They must be reconciled, in one of two ways. An attempt may be made to deaden religious feeling, to get rid of warmth, energy, devotion, to slay the love of the Hindu for Hinduism, of the Musalman for Islam, of the Parsi for Zoroastrianism, of the Christian for Christianity; were this possible—but it is not possible—we should have a nation of corpses, not of living men. . . .

The second way is to see\* in each religion a branch of a single tree; to act on the saying of Shri Krishna: "On whatever road a man approaches me, on that road do I welcome him, for all roads are mine"; of Muhammad the Prophet: "We make no differences between prophets"; of the Sufis: "The ways to God are as many as the breaths of the children of men." . . . What matters it that one worships in a temple and the other in a mosque, if both are Indians and serving a single nation?

As there is one God with many names, there is one India with many sub-races and families. Why should Banglā Hindu and Banglā Muhammadan behave as though their interests were opposed, when they both are born of one India, are sons of one Motherland? There is no religion which can be

<sup>1</sup> India is a country in which every great religion finds a home. Go back as far as you will and you will find that Hinduism exists. Go down later and you will then find Buddhism establishing itself with its wonderful ethics. Go down further still, and you will find Jainism almost contemporary with Buddhism. But you will find Christianity in the first century after Christ and on the West Coast. It has to become one of the Indian religions and no longer only the religion of the foreigner. Then still later you will come to the great Prophet of Arabia and his people, together with the exiles from Persia, the Parsis; the whole of them are here in India in a common Motherland, and have a common interest, and should have a common pride. It is in these ways by studying each side that so much will be gained.

cast out of the nation's household. We may think of Christianity as the religion of the white races, and hence foreign. But in the south-west of India there are Christian towns and villages dating from the second or third century of the Christian era, and thus have an Indian life of over 1600 years. They cannot be ostracized, or treated as step-children in the house of the Mother. And indeed, a nation is the richer, not the poorer, by varieties of thought, and not one jewel should be grudged its place in the necklet that adorns the Mother, whose most ancient possession is the jewel of the religion of the Universal Self. As many peoples must blend here into One Nation, so many religions must blend into the One Religion.

### *From Nationality to Humanity*

Religion is essential to patriotism, because nothing else destroys the separative tendency in men, and prevents the disintegration of bodies of workers by continual subdivisions. Religion alone teaches man to feel his unity with his fellows, and leads him to sacrifice the smaller to the larger Self. Unless the isolation brought about by antagonistic self-interests can be destroyed by religion, nationality will ever remain a dream. It is religion which has ever bound individuals into a tribe, and tribes into a nation. With the revival of religion in India has come the spread of a sense of brotherhood, of unity, of nationality. With the growth of religion, nationality has grown. With this more and more will come the spirit of self-sacrifice, the spirit that sacrifices itself as a part to the whole, the only spirit that can make a nation. Love of family grows into love of village ; love of

village into love of district ; love of district into love of province ; love of province into love of nation. Ay, and love of nation shall grow into love of Humanity, and all religions blend one day in a Universal Religion.

But as the various religions are still needed, and the next step is to see them as branches of One Religion, so various nations are still needed, and the next step is to see them as branches of Humanity, so that we may love all and hate none. At our stage of evolution, patriotism, love of one nation is a necessity, for each nation has to develop its own characteristics, in order that Humanity may show forth a many-sided perfection. A man who is not a patriot, unless he be a great Rishi or Sage, will be no true lover of Humanity. The man who has not evolved the smaller loves cannot really feel the larger. The indifferent husband and father is not the material out of which the good citizen is made ; it is the man who is the good householder who is also the good citizen. The man who neglects the sanitary arrangements of his own house will not attend to those of the Municipality ; and how shall the man who neglects the lighting, and draining, and paving, of his own town, be trusted with the affairs of the Province ; and how shall he who cares nothing for the welfare of his Province, be trusted with the affairs of the Nation ? How shall he who fails in the small, succeed in the great ?

The good father expands into the good citizen ; the good citizen into the good provincial leader ; the good provincial leader into the good national leader, and these, perchance in future lives, to the leaders of Humanity. The great lovers of Humanity love it with a passion such as that with which a

mother loves her first-born son. Never, then, let a man fear that love to his Motherland will prevent him from loving Humanity. It is the road thereto ; the heart expands as it is exercised.

Ungrudging love of the Motherland is, then, the thing needed. *Vande Mataram* ; worship the Mother. But let it be remembered that while patriotism is the flower, service is the fruit, and patriotism must grow into service.

As men of every faith unite in social, civil, and political work they will bring the spirit of religion into all, and work with love and knowledge. Then shall India show the world that a Nation may embrace all varieties of thought, and only be the richer for the variety, and from India shall spread that spirit of knowledge and love which shall blend all nations into one Brotherhood of Humanity, and merge all religions in the WISDOM.

—June 1907, *Religion and Patriotism*

## ***YOUR MOTHER, INDIA, IS APPEALING***

India can never again be great, save as she is religious ; India can never again be great, save as she gains the Spirituality that she has lost. If she can win that back, then behind it will come all other things, intellectual power, and material wealth, and all the lower things that enter into the growth of national life. But one charge has she received from the Highest ; one duty that, undischarged, weighs her down to the ground but, that discharged, will lift her again a light and beacon in the eyes of men, and that is to be the safeguard, above all things, of religion and truth, and to wed spiritual philosophy to the devotion of a noble religion.

If that great work is taken up and carried out, everything else will follow in its train ; if it is sought after, all other things that are good will come to you as its inevitable successors.

Your Mother, India, is appealing day by day and year by year. Often I think that, during these years of the Kaliyuga, she has gone away into some far-off region to wait there until her children call her back ; for how shall she, Mother and Guru of the world, from whose past have grown the world's philosophies, the world's religions, the world's sublimest teachings—how shall she come and dwell in a land that forgets religion and philosophy, and plays with the toys of children instead of realizing the aims of men ? She often bows in worship to the Great Ones who watch, far off, on the Himalayan peaks, all the pitfalls in the way of the child they love. . . . I seem to think that India, our Mother, is standing there in the midst of this circle of the Rishis, waiting for the time when she can descend again and illuminate the child she loves.

And what shall bring her ? What brings the mother hastening homeward ? The thought that her children are crying for her in her absence. . . . Sometimes I think that India, the Mother, is only waiting patiently, contentedly enough in the wisdom of her mother's love, seeing her children playing in the streets with the toys and follies of the little child ; waiting till hunger for spiritual knowledge and thirst for spiritual teachings shall send the children clamouring home with the cry for mother on their lips. I hear in my dreams that cry rising from the Indian land ; I see in my dreams child after child weary of the play in the street, and thinking of turning homeward where the mother's



arms are waiting. Looking upwards, I see on her face a smile, the smile of mother's love waiting to welcome her truants home again. I know that soon there will rise from the whole of India the one mighty cry :

“ O India our Mother ; Mother and Guru of the world,  
Come back amongst us once again ! Come home ! ”

—1900, *India*

## **“ IN THE WHITE LIGHT OF INDIA, A NATION ”**

I feel strongly . . . that only on the basis of religion can a true Nationality be built up—Religion itself which gives the sense of human dignity joined to the sense of human duty, and the self-respect of India could never have arisen as it has arisen today, had not the philosophies and the religions of the past re-won their empire over the Indian heart ; and the virtues that the great religions typify, all of which we find in this sacred land, are virtues that we need for the building of our Nation.

Shall we not learn from Hinduism to see the one Self in all, and to know that in men of every caste, of every class, to see the Self equally dwelling is to touch the central truth of that most ancient faith ? Shall we not learn from Zoroastrianism the necessity for National purity, from Buddhism and Jainism the need for wisdom and right thinking ? Shall we not learn from Islam that great lesson of true democracy which Islam above all other religions of the world exemplified in the life and teachings of the great Prophet ? Shall we not add to these the courage of the Sikh and so make perfect the virtues of a great National life ? And shall we not realize

that Christianity brings also the great jewel of sacrifice and its lesson?

Thus, . . . looking at all the religions of the world as rays of the one Light, these religions shall join together to make the white Light of India a Nation, nothing left out, nothing excluded, learning from each other and trying to admire and serve each other.

And so, on that foundation, building up the great life of the Nation, we will recognize the truth . . . that England has revived the faith in her own love of liberty which, it was thought, was becoming a doubtful thing in many an Indian heart. With the West represented by England and the East represented by India, we have the mightiest combination that the earth can show, each necessary to the other.

—27 September 1917, *New India*

One important section of the Plan is the Union of Great Britain and India as Free and Equal Nations in the great Federation of Free Nations which will form the splendid Indo-British Commonwealth, linking Asia and Europe together in amity, and embracing the Dominions which ring the globe. It will join all the Religions which are followed within the Nations into a spiritual Union, which shall know no rivalries save those of Service, no bond save that of Love, in which all are recognized as ways which lead to the One without a second, the Universal FATHER, who "hath made of one blood all the Nations upon earth." In the New Age the Unity of Religions will be recognized, and religious Peace will reign instead of religious wars.<sup>1</sup>

—March 1923, *Theosophist*

<sup>1</sup> See also Religious Education.

# CULTURE

## ***THE SECRET OF INDIA'S IMMORTAL YOUTH***<sup>1</sup>

What is that secret ? It lay hidden in her Education and her Culture, or rather in the Ideals which created these ; for the Idea is prior to the form, and if today men think that her strength is dissipated, her energy outworn, it is because she has for a moment—for what is a century and a half but a moment in her millennial life ?—sold her birth-right, as her Mother's first-born child, for a mess of western pottage. Let her turn again to her Ideals, and she shall renew her strength. For Ideals are the generating Life which unfolds through many incarnations, embodies itself in many a successive form, but remains ever true to type. We, who believe in India's Immortality, do not need to reproduce the bodies, the forms, of the past, but we need that that life, the life of the Mother Immortal, shall embody itself in new forms, but that it shall be Her Life, and not another's.

Let us distinguish between Education and Culture : Education is the drawing out and training of inborn capacities and powers—brought over from former lives and developed

<sup>1</sup> See also " India's Glorious Cultural Heritage," Section II,

in the Svargic or Deva world. . . . Culture is the result on the mind of certain forms of Knowledge, and is based on these; but it differs from Education in that it is not the drawing out and training of faculty, but is the result of the exercise of faculties on subjects which arouse sympathetic emotion and imagination, broadening the mind, eliminating personal, local and racial prejudices, acquiring an understanding of human nature in its many aspects, and contacting the life-side rather than the form-side of creatures; hence the quick internal response to other lives, and the intuition of the unity of life beneath the diversity of life-expressions. . . . Literature and Art are the instruments of Culture. Science and the "clear cold light" of reason are the area and the guide of Education. The Life in Nature and the intellectual intuition, which recognizes truth by its harmony with its own nature—"whose nature is Knowledge"—are the area and the guide of Culture.' If these are completely separated during the plastic period of youth, Science tends to hardness, and, in over-specialization, to narrow-mindedness and intolerance; Culture tends, when exaggerated, to false sentiment and fastidiousness in non-essentials. The training of the instruments of knowledge and the storing of the memory with facts is the work of Education by others in youth, and their application to the facts and conditions is the self-education which continues during life. Culture in youth consists in the unconscious development and refinement of passions into emotions amid beautiful surroundings, for the contacts with beautiful objects and the evoking and the control of the emotions in response to them, and the moulding of these by Literature and Art develop the

discrimination which is an element in self-culture, the critical faculty which manifests as a balanced judgment, not as mere fault-finding, and lends poise, dignity, and gentleness to the attitude towards life. . . . Beauty was an essential feature of the Indian Ideal of Education and Culture. . . .

In the Ancient System of India, Education and Culture were self-controlled. . . . The University was the Temple of Learning, and the learned were its only Hierophants. When Learning visited Royalty, when a Wise One entered a Court, even Sri Krishna descended from His throne and bowed at the feet of the Sage. . . .

The revival and advance of true Indian Art Ideals, in the renaissance identified with that gifted family of true Artists, the Tagores, . . . nurses in its bosom the rightful Infant Heir of the heritage of India's Art Ideals in the Past, the Infant who, in the future, in the maturity of India's Art Ideals, shall give to the world the priceless gift of an Art which shall redeem it alike from materialism and superstition, and shall make the life of the Nation and the life of the individual full of Beauty, in the cottage as well as in the palace, for Art, as I have oftentimes said, must be no longer a luxury for the rich but the daily bread of the poor. That is part of India's Dharma.

For Beauty diversified into the Arts is the true refiner and uplifter of Humanity, for it is the instrument of Culture, the broadener of the heart, the purifying Fire which burns up all prejudices, all pettiness, all coarseness. Without it, true Democracy is impossible, equality of social intercourse an empty dream. Art is the international language, in which mind can speak to mind, heart to heart, where lips are

dumb. Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Music, these need no translations, they speak the universal Mother-tongue. Centuries do not age them. Custom does not stale them. Boundaries do not exist for them. Their message is for every country, for every tongue. Art will permeate the whole atmosphere of the New Civilization which is on the threshold. Religion and Art have ever been twin-angels. Let us follow them as they point to the East, where the fair Dawn Maidens are tinting our earth-born clouds with their rose-tipped fingers, to welcome the Rising Sun of India, as He leaps across the horizon, and floods our world with the glory of His Unveiled Face.

—1925, *Indian Ideals* (Kamala Lectures)

## INDIAN IDEALS OF ART

In seeking the Ideals of India, most ancient of Nations, we naturally turn to the Ancient Way of Knowing, and seek in the Universal the Ideal of Beauty, the origin of all beautiful things. In the Supreme Self we find the triple aspect Sat, Chit, Ânanda: Being, Cognition, Will. To which of these should we relate Beauty? I submit that it is a Composite of the three: of Being as Becoming, of Cognition as the awareness, the recognition, of things considered by the observer as beautiful, of Will which, as desire, seeks to appropriate these as happiness-giving. . . .

The third aspect in the Supreme Îshvara as in all Îshvaras, in Becoming, is a manifestation of Beauty in all His works—His Activity is Beauty. The Ancient Wisdom declares this omnipresent fact, whether it comes down from old Egypt in the symbolical form of Freemasonry, or revels in natural beauty, due to the embodiment of Devas, in the Vaidic

hymns ; and this is equally though less poetically asserted by Modern Science in its microscopical researches, when it finds that, let its vision be extended to embrace the minutest forms yet reached, they are ever beautiful, and exquisitely finished by the Divine Artificer of our world.

It is in the Philosophy of Hindu India that her Ideals of Beauty are firmly rooted, and in Art, as in all manifestations of the Divine Life, it is Cośmic Ideation, the Creative Activity of the Divine Thought, which—bodying itself forth in subtlest matter in which Sattva, Harmony, predominates over Tamas and Rajas—imposes Beauty: the inter-harmonious relation between all parts of every form, that is the essential characteristic of every Type-Idea, or Arche-type, whence all special forms belonging to that Arche-type are generated. . . .

Take with this the Greek idea of the Supreme Divinity, as the Good, the Beautiful, and the True, and you have in "the Beautiful" the abstract Idea, of which the essence, the Real, the Eternal, is Beauty, whence all beautiful particulars, concrete things, emanate, come forth, as though it were an aroma, which gives its fragrance to many objects, making each sweet with its touch. . . .

If the view of Plato and the Indian view are put side by side, they will be found to be practically identical. . . . To Plato, Universals were Real, were true Being ; particulars share, as it were, are derived from, the Realities. . . . Beauty has Real Being, and all beautiful things have this quality, which makes them Beautiful ; they do not exist as Beautiful by Human thought, but by Divine Ideation. The universe lives and moves "according to God," as Plato taught, and all beautiful things are as veils through which Eternal Beauty shines. . . .

We might then say that, as the Life of Ishvara is immanent in everything in His universe, so the aspect of His Life which is Beauty is immanent in all beautiful things. . . .

We can make our definition of Art : It is an attempt to bring down within the vision of ordinary mortals some of the Divine Beauty of which the Artist catches glimpses ; he strives to translate these into colours, sounds, sculptures, poems, and other literature, reproducing in others through his special art the pleasurable emotion aroused in himself by his glimpses of supernal Beauty, sensed by the Ego. . . .

For all True Art, as all True Science, comes from Above, through mortals of our race who have risen above the crowd by memory and imagination—imagination based on memory, not memory of physical happiness, but of the Ego, when in some rapt moment of ecstasy, freed from physical limitations, he touches illuminated reach of wondrous manifestation, lit by the Light which is from Above.

Take Music and Architecture, and you will understand the feeling which made Goethe describe some great religious Cathedral as “ frozen music ” ; listen to some true melody, and let yourself drift away from its waves, and see an exquisite fairy structure rise before your closed eyes, reproducing the melody which bore you into a subtler world, wherein sounds build forms, and gracious temples rise around you, built by the music which Devas use to erect in lines of light those shining fanes. . . .

When we remember that Beauty is clothed in the matter in which Sattva, Harmony, predominates, it is easy to see why music, the very embodiment of Harmony, is the highest of the arts, and is so much in evidence in religious services.



It aids meditation, soothes the restless mind into serenity, and exalts the feeling of Bhakti.

Natarāja dancing, as in the wondrous figure in the heart of the great Temple of Chidambaram, shakes from His Damru the sounds which built worlds, for creation is the activity of the High Gods, whose laughter falls in golden rain of benedictions on Their Work, and all the Sons of God surround it, shouting for joy. . . .

### *The Priest of the Beautiful*

Art . . . is the vision, or the intuition, of the Beauty Aspect of the SELF. The Artist sees more, intuits more, than the man of the world. It is this which makes him the Priest of the Beautiful, the mediator between blind men and the Divine Aspect which is Beauty, the Revealer of the Hidden Beauty, so often hidden by unrealities. . . .

The artist is great or small by the greatness or smallness of his Ego, not by the deftness of his hands. No perfection of technique can avail if naught comes through it ; it is but as a tinkling cymbal. Plato, with his clear vision of the relation between the outer and the inner worlds, said that you could foretell the outbreak of a revolution by the change of the people's taste in music. Art belongs to the life-side of Nature, and hence the type of a Nation's Art is a "key-signature," a "mind-signature," of the Nation's inner life. Frivolous music attracts the "butterfly mind." The fierce "*ça ira*" set the French crowd singing it into a wild whirling dance through the streets in the days of the Revolution, and it came back during the days of the Commune. . . .

How opposite is the effect of sacred Indian music, how closely is it allied to Nature, and how accurately it sings itself into her moods. The *râga* of the morning freshness cannot be used in the evening hour, for music is Nature's moods intellectualized and made articulate in the world of Buddhi. . . . It builds and shatters, it creates and destroys ; hence its enormous power over a crowd, where it is in harmony with their dominant emotion, and raising it to the nth power, it tosses them about as it will. . . . Beauty [is] the manifestation of Being in all creative work of Ishvara during the period of His Activity, and hence the infinite number of beautiful things which bear Beauty as His hall-mark, the signature of the Divine Artist. The Being is Beauty ; the beautiful particulars are in a continual flux of Becoming, on the wheel of births and deaths. Art is the creative activity of Man, his heritage from his " Father-in-Heaven," and his duty, as animated by the One Life, is to make himself, in all his creative activities, a co-worker with the Supreme Artist, a centre of Beauty, and a creator of beautiful actions. Ugliness, dirt, unseemly behaviour, coarse words, rough speech, clumsy actions, are all offences against the law of Nature, which is, as Goethe said, the Garment by which we see God. . . . Man can be Nature's best co-worker . . . [in her] ceaseless efforts to eradicate the ugly and to restore Beauty. . . . He can quicken the Becoming, and guide it in the best way. . . .

Let us make our cities beautiful ; above all, let us make our Schools beautiful. Let us surround the children with beauty and joy, and they shall grow into harmonious relations with each other. Let us bring Art to the Schools, the

Colleges, the Universities, as of old, and the Arts and Crafts to our Villages. Let us wear the graceful and suitable raiment of the East, not the ugly and inartistic raiment of the West. Let each of us be a messenger of Beauty, in our language, our manners, our courtesy. All this Beauty is hidden in the Indian heart, in the Indian customs ; why do you hide it away, as if ashamed of it, instead of reforming those who bring uglier ways from abroad ? Your dharma, as Indians, is to spread Beauty around you, and not allow yourselves to be distorted into ugliness.

—1925, *Indian Ideals*

## **RELEASE THROUGH MUSIC**

Why does music exercise so great an influence over the passions and the emotions of man ? Why is it that religion has ever found in music one of its strongest helpers, one of its most inspiring agencies ? Why is it that . . music . . is found to be most useful . . to enable the mind to rise from the physical plane, and to soar upwards into the higher regions of consciousness ?

Both in Chinese and Hebrew music, as in Hindu, the intervals between the notes are much less than in western. A chromatic scale in the West gives the limits on a western piano ; in the East, many notes are interposed, and the gradations are so fine as to be indistinguishable to a western ear until it is trained to hear them ; hence Indian musicians are often accused of being “ flat,” “ out of tune,” by the western stranger, while they are producing thrills of joy among their compatriots, sheer gasps of pleasure over the exquisitely fine gradations produced by the skilled voice or fingers. The

Indian ear by long heredity has been evolved to appreciate these minute gradations of sound, as the eye of the Kashmiri and Persian weavers has been evolved to perceive nuances of colour to which other eyes are blind. I presume that the Indian ear has thus become a more finely organized sound-receiver than the European. . . .

There is another fundamental difference between eastern and western music; eastern music is a succession of notes, a melody, while western music consists of notes played simultaneously, and yielding harmony. The one, as it rises, becomes more subtly divided, more ethereal and elusive; the other, as it rises, becomes more massive, more splendid in complexity or blended sounds. . . .

In the West there are Niagara cascades of sounds, whirlpools and rapids of chords, storms of thunderous instrumental clashings, and then finally, when the breath is well-nigh strangled in the rushing waves of sounds, one is flung panting on to a flower-sprinkled meadow of peace, and a melody exquisite, celestial, sweet, breathes a harmony more tender and serene than eastern music knows. Another marked thing in western music is that it stirs the passions, sometimes masters the intellect, but it does not touch the spiritual notes, which often thrill the nerves to a pleasure that touches pain in its keenness, well-known in Indian music. And I have sometimes noticed that where the Indian music is appealing to the passion of love, where the songs are love-songs, even then they tend to pass beyond the passionate into the emotional, from the coarser to the subtler forms of the master-desire. The music stirs the more delicate shades of love, the finer chords, the unsatisfied yearning of it, the

ever-frustrated longing for utter identity, so that it is not an appeal to passion but rather of lifting passion into emotion, purifying and refining, with an ever elusive suggestion of the underlying meanings of the physical, of the regions where Spirit is the lover, where God is the beloved.

There is a well-known use of music for the rousing of passion, alike in East and West, the use which is made of it in war. We read in the *Bhagavad-Gita* of the use of the conch by the leaders in the great battle, sending out the conch-note like a lion's roar, and how the mighty sounds enheartened the combatants, ringing across the embattled hosts in challenge and reply. . . .

I have not found in western music, however, strong and ennobling as it is, that peculiar and elusive power which in Hindu music predisposes to the higher forms of meditation by which, as its own sounds sink into silence for the entranced mind and heart, the consciousness slips away from the body, leaving it cradled in the melody, and passes into the higher regions. There are delicate notes given out by the instruments which thrill softly out and cause subtlest vibrations in the higher bodies till all sounds are left behind and spirit is set free. Those single delicate notes seem to have a power greater than any chord; the chord raises passion or emotion; these single notes thrill to spiritual ecstasy; the one predisposes to activity, the other to quiescence, to contemplation, to peace. This seems to me to be the greatest service that music can do to religion. For the difficulty met with in meditation is very largely a difficulty caused by the subtle body. Accustomed to respond continually to impacts from without, this body is ever

vibrating and ever changing its vibrations. These vibrations bring about continual changes in consciousness, and these again re-act on the body. Religious music checks these movements, imposes its own vibrations on the body, and instead of the jangle that is noise there are the rhythmical vibrations of the music. Gradually the whole body is calmed, and held to these steady vibrations, and the calm is answered by the steadiness of the consciousness, responsive to its rhythmically vibrating vehicle. Thus by music can the subtle body be made a help to the steadying of consciousness instead of being, as it usually is, a hindrance. This calming and steadying, then, is one of the services that music can render to meditation.

There is another, when we use the specialized form of music known as a mantra. A mantra is a sequence of sounds arranged so as to bring about a definite result. The mantra has its Devata and this Devata belongs to one of the Hierarchies, each one of which has its own musical note, and the sequence is arranged in harmony with this. When the subtle body is made to vibrate according to this sequence, it is vibrating with the vibrations of the Devata, and thus is more susceptible to his influence, more open to receive impressions from him. A mantra brings about mechanically with little difficulty a condition which is hard to reach in any other way, thus shortening the time of preparation and leaving more strength of mind and will for the proper work of meditation. Only the mantra must be accurately chanted or recited. Full effect must be given to every note, whether sung aloud or within ; the right sequence, the right cadence, must be employed. Every sequence, every cadence, has its

own vibratory effect, and if you change these you change the effect ; for the laws of sound are as inviolable as any other law of nature. . . .

As the earthly mantras aid in harmonizing us, we are going towards the chanting of that final mantra which shall be ours when the Spirit realizes its freedom, and thus reaches the true liberation, the true moksha, the mantra which shall make our bodies impervious to the jangling noises of earth. Music will help you, if you choose it well ; music will hinder you, if you use it to stimulate the lower instead of the higher in you. Knit religion to music, and music to religion, and then music will become more inspired, and religion more beautiful, until the highest music and the most spiritual religion will be the atmosphere in which you can most freely breathe.

—7 March 1908, *Religion and Music*

## ***THE HINDU GODS IN ART***

There is one matter on which—considering how much of Indian Art is Hindu—it is necessary to touch, and that is the way in which Hindu Art in the olden times treated Devas and Divine Men. . . .

In the innumerable images of the three-aspected Īshvara, Brahmā, Vishnu, and Mahādeva, their Shaktis, as those of the Devas and Devis of the various worlds of living beings, the Hindus of the early period set the method of representation which became traditional in the religion. Beauty of Face and Form is not sought for in Divine Images ; the task of due representation is recognized as impossible. The Images represent powers, qualities, symbols signaling

incidents ; or they are seated on special animals, Siva on Nandi, the Bull ; Vishnu on Garuda, the Eagle ; Brahmâ on Hamsa, the Swan, and so on. They are meant to be used in worship, and to fix the attention of the worshipper on the qualities of the Object of his adoration. Rich and varied is Hindu symbology, rich and varied as the Powers in Nature which the symbols represent. The Hindu faces philosophically and equally all the phenomena of Nature, terrible or agreeable ; they are all emanated from the One Love and work out His beneficent purposes, since there is but One Life, and he shares it with all that live.

—1925, *Indian Ideals*

## INDIA'S UNIQUE GENIUS

Come to the East, and stand in front of a dim but alluring image of a range of the Himalayan snows. How wonderful they are. They draw you towards them ; you are there among them ; you are in that rare, tense atmosphere which takes you to its bosom, and you feel the chill as the mist enwraps you, and you are all alone, one with the eternal snows, with the mighty strength of the mountain which has become yourself. Alone ? Are you so sure ? Your eyes rest on the snow on that great peak, which draws your very life away, yet leaves you more living for the draining. Through the mist, through the snow, through the mountain itself, there slowly emanates from them a Face—surely a Face ? Yes ! there are the profound all-seeing Eyes, the calm broad forehead, like a cliff, arising above the brows—and in those Eyes all the strength of the mountain, all the magic of the snows, all the depth of the over-arching sky. It is Mahâdeva !



It is Siva, the Beloved ! It is the Beauty Eternal, the Youth Immortal. It is not man lifted into Godhead, but God out-gazing at you through the mask of a human face. Oh ! wonderful illusion of a great Artist, who can so suggest the Indescribable as not to jar either the memory or the imagination of a devotee.

On a much lower plane is a difference I have remarked in the average Indian Artist, when he draws or paints a portrait, and his fellow-artist in the West. He does not have "sittings." He watches his subject when engaged in his various pursuits ; presumably he notices expressions and stores them in his retentive memory ; finally, he produces a *likeness*, of which the actual technique may be good or bad, according to his training, but it conveys something of the character of the subject, and is alive. . . .

A similar peculiarity is seen in the eastern animal drawings and paintings ; they are alive, they are moving, they are full of vivid energy ; the flying bird, the bounding deer, the galloping horse, live on the canvas. One imagines that the artist has watched the creature he portrays, and, again, has stored up the images in his memory, whence he projects a composite which expresses the creature as we see it. . . .

A true Indian painter . . . studies the natural object he is going to paint. He goes away and meditates on it. He is able to bring through more of the Divine thought embodied in it than you and I can see in that natural object, and so to add to our knowledge of God by showing the powers of the Self shining out through the forms He has created. That is the Indian genius and the Indian way.

—1925, *Indian Ideals*, and 12 January 1918, *New India*

# EDUCATION

## THE DUTY OF THE BRAHMANA

What is the first problem that is pressing on every nation? That of the education of the young. . . . How should that be solved? There is one way—though no public leader yet has suggested it—that has within it the power of solution and that is by the recognition of real castes, and among them the caste of teachers. Your Dharma as Brâhmanas—those of you who are Brâhmanas—is not the gathering of wealth and the holding of places of power; but the gathering of knowledge and the imparting of that knowledge to the people. If the Brâhmanas would only do that duty as Brâhmanas, then there would be no educational problems in India today. But the Brâhmanas, instead of doing their duty by imparting instruction, are busy in administering justice—which is properly the function of the Kshattriya; they are busy gathering wealth—which is properly the duty of the Vaishya. . . . If we had true Brâhmanas in India, all educational problems would be solved. . . .

—1917, *The Ancient Ideal of Duty*

## THE CHILD IS A SPIRIT

Reincarnation must reconstruct our educational system and our penology. The child must be seen as a Spirit, evolving from within latent powers, and bringing with him definite faculties, his creation out of his experiences in past lives. His education must be based on a study of the individual child and fitted to his intellect and his temperament. Not only a "religious" has a "vocation"; each child has a vocation, is "called of God," the Hidden God, to serve the larger Life in the smaller. As I have said elsewhere: "The Education must be made to fit the needs of the child, not the child be made to fit the education." Education here is a Procrustes' bed; the short are pulled out, the tall are lopped off, to fit it. The School is a place of fear, not a place of joy; the pupils are ruled by punishment, not by love. Initiative is crushed out; home lessons lengthen the school hours; the body and mind are overstrained, and the healthy riotousness of all young things is checked. The western Nations are remodelling their educational systems, and we in India must do the same. We need a National system under Indian control. . . .

—1 June 1917, *The Theosophist*

## IDEALS IN EDUCATION

Nothing is more necessary in education than the holding up of Ideals before the minds of the young. One of the greatest defects in the education of boys in India is the absence of this presentation of Ideals, and the consequent absence of enthusiasm. A really noble manhood cannot

grow out of a boyhood which is left uncultivated on the emotional side. Much of the patriotism of Englishmen, which makes possible the growth of the Empire, is sown during their schooldays, when their highest feelings are constantly evoked by the holding up of the memories of great Englishmen—great in religion, in self-sacrifice, in love of country. Indian boys are even more sensitive than are English lads to the compelling power of such examples, but these must be drawn from the past of their own country. One of the most remarkable things about the Central Hindu College in Benares was the swift response of the students to the great national Ideals constantly held up before their eyes. It was one of my greatest joys there to see the young faces brighten and glow, as I spoke to them of self-sacrifice for the Motherland, of love of country and of service. And here, in Madras, I have found the same thing in every address which I have given to students ; there is always the same lighting up of the eager faces, the same swift response to the appeal. But there is apparently no School here which makes such evocation and training of right emotion part of its regular instruction, as was done at the Central Hindu College. Yet people complain of the lack of enthusiasm and of self-sacrifice in the men ! As well might the husbandman complain of his barren field when he has sown no seed therein.

—November 1913, *The Young Citizen*

You will only prove yourselves trueborn if you live again as your sires did.

—1901, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life*

## ***THE VITAL NECESSITY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION***

Religion is necessary as the basis for Morality . . . , as the inspiration of Art . . . as the foundation of original Literature . . . [So] is Religion necessary for the greatness of a nation, for what kind of a nation can you have without Morality, without Art, without Literature ? . . .

### ***As the Basis for Morality***

In most countries of the world, religion has been made the basis of morality, for the Founders of religion were occultists, who understood the nature of men, who intended religion to guide their evolution, and who, knowing that the motives which appealed to men at one stage, failed to appeal to them at another, graded their teachings to suit the grade in evolution of their hearers. In each great religion, the sayings of its Founder, His precepts, His commands, have been accepted as the moral law of His people. . . . The religions of the world trained their believers into a practical and useful morality, by which nations have been builded, civilization has been rendered possible, and a social order has been secured. . . .

The great gifts of Hinduism to the world are the teachings of the Immanence of God and the Solidarity of Mankind. . . . Hinduism has taught them with supreme lucidity, because its religion and its philosophy were shaped by occultists addressing the subtlest and keenest brains that humanity has yet evolved. The unity of the Self—that, and that only, is the sure foundation for morality, the rock which can never

be shaken, the basis which no logic can impugn, which experience continually reverifies. . . . On this irrefragable, impregnable Truth, may morality be built surely and fearlessly ! It is the Rock of Ages, eternal, stable, secure. . . .

We are all one in the unity of the universal life, we are all one in the unity of the Self, who knows no " other." But if you and I are one, one Life, one Self, though in two forms, then if I injure you, I injure myself ; if I lie to you, I am lying to myself, and the lie will deceive me and I shall fall : if I cheat you, I am cheating myself, and that cheating will defraud me, and I shall suffer. I cannot get away from you. I cannot separate myself from you. We appear as two, but one life unites us, and the blow that I aim at you inflicts pain on myself. This is the truth which, denied, asserts itself as pain ; which, accepted and lived by, reveals itself as bliss. This is the law which destroys civilizations which ignore it, which crushes into fragments, into dust, every society which refuses to obey it. It has destroyed scores of civilizations, and only a civilization built upon it shall endure.

So is every community, every nation, one body, a smaller within the larger Self. . . . If men pour into that national life, cowardice, and lies, and cheating, and knavery, the whole nation is poisoned, the vitality of the nation is lowered, and good men and evil men alike suffer from the common ill. . . . The whole morality of the nation is lowered by the presence in it of a number of dishonest men, whether their dishonesty be legally punishable or not. They spread through the nation like a subtle poison, for we cannot be separated the one from the other, since we are all clothed in one matter, and are all living by one life.

Nor can injustice be done to one part of the nation, without the rest of the nation suffering. All nations have a degraded class of people belonging to them, in whose persons the Unity of the Self is outraged. . . . Here also is a similar class of people, . . . the class called the Panchamas, or Pariahs, or outcastes. Some five and a half millions of these people are living on Indian soil, the remnants of the conquered aborigines of the country, submerged by the waves of the Aryan conquerors. For many generations you have sought to push these people away, to keep them separate. . . . Has this denial of the Unity of the Self profited the Aryan conquerors, or has not the karma of conquest and oppression worked itself out, has not Nemesis trodden on the heels of wrong? The Aryans who conquered the elder races, now, in their turn, are conquered by their youngers, and they are forced to drink of the bitter cup which they have held to other lips. The liberty they have denied to others is denied to them. . . . It is not to the point that you are, intellectually and morally, the equals of your conquerors, while these people were an inferior, as well as a conquered race. Oppression is oppression, on whomsoever it is wrought; insolence is insolence, whether shown to high or low; the very fact that these were your inferiors, helpless in your hands, rendered them the more worthy of your compassion, of your pity; it is the tears of the weak that rot the foundations of empires. . . .

### *As the Inspiration of Art*

Many people do not consider, do not understand, how important is the part played by Art in the life of a nation,

and how impossible it is for a nation to reach a full-orbed greatness unless Art plays its part in the shaping of the nation's growth. The Art of a nation is the expression of that nation's conception of the Beautiful, of its love of harmony, proportion, and order. The Beautiful is that which refines and polishes a nation, gives it dignity and grace and self-restraint. Inevitably vulgar becomes the nation which has no true Art. . . . There, passion changes to brutality, and love puts on the hideous mask of lust. Study nature, alike in the masses with which she constructs a world, and in the details with which she crowds the smallest nook in her vast realms, and you will understand that one of the pillars on which the Great Architect of the Universe constructs His Universe is Beauty.

India, the country whose life has everywhere been permeated by religion, has wrought Beauty into the daily life of her people, and hence the refinement which is the common possession of her children. Look at the vessels in daily use in an Indian home, in which Western influence has not vulgarized the ways of living, and you will find them all beautiful in form and colour; the kitchen utensils, the brass and pottery, would serve as ornaments of an English drawing-room; the women's dresses, the hangings, the carpets, are all lovely from an artistic standpoint; beauty meets you at every turn in the domestic life, a constant delight to the eye, a refining influence on every member of the household. Go into a country village, and you see the peasant woman draped in a sari exquisite in colour, falling in graceful folds round the erect and supple form; she bears on her head a brazen vessel of noble outline, or an earthen



one of brownish-red, harmonizing with the trees she passes, a veritable picture, though but a village lass or dame. That beauty of the surroundings softens and mellows the life, and lends it a charm of dignity and grace which refines and educates.

But even into the village life the vulgarizing influence is spreading, and sometimes the peasant woman going to the well, still wearing the graceful sari, still carrying her head with queenly dignity, bears on that head neither the brilliant brass, throwing back the glory of the sun-ray, nor the glowing red of the village potter's handiwork, but the stiffly outlined, unlovely kerosene oil tin. You may think it does not matter, but that is not so. It matters, because the subtly vulgarizing and coarsening influence of the replacing of beauty by ugliness in common life drags the whole nation to a lower level. The peasants catch their colour from their environments. . . .

There is nothing in nature untouched by man that has not its own beauty and its own grace. The forest depths and the mountain solitudes, the tossing waves of ocean and the shimmering ripples of the lake, the little out-of-the-way valley, cradled in the bosom of the hills and carpeted with flowers, the snow-clad peak, the brilliant blue and the summer noon, the dark star-spangled depths of midnight, the white radiance of the moon, the dancing shadows cast by the sunbeams—what are these but signs of the eternal Beauty, the sign-manual of God? Nature, which is His expression in matter, in her contact with the ugly and the formless, is ever moulding into new forms of beauty the chaotic matter which is the plastic material for her artist fingers. Beauty is a real power, and each religion, in its day

of supremacy, has generated some great Art. The faith of Islam, conquering Northern India, gave to its new home the exquisite lines of the Taj Mahal, the beauty of the Pearl Mosque, the marvellous courts of the Delhi Palace. . . . Everywhere has religion given birth to Art, the cult of the Beautiful, and faith has been the inspiration that gave life to the brush and the chisel. If our modern days have no great Art, it is because they have no might of faith. They copy, but they cannot create. And not until the great spiritual impulse now sweeping over the earth, that we call the Divine Wisdom, Theosophy, gives birth to a new ideal and conception of Beauty, will the Art of the future be seen among us, the Art which shall be the expression of Beauty for our age. If you would preserve what is left of Indian Art, if you would create the Indian Art of the future, you must revive the religious spirit which is the mother of Art, you must welcome the latest—and the most ancient—expression of that spirit, Theosophy, the Supreme Science. Then, and then only, will Indian ideals of Beauty draw again the hearts of mankind, and give through the most spiritual of religions, the highest expression of Art.

### *As the Foundation of Great Literature*

Where religion is not an essential part of the education given to the youth of a nation, there the nation has no literature worthy to be called great. By "great" literature, I mean literature that is original, literature produced by the creative, as distinguished from the imitative, intelligence. Trace back your own literature, and you will see that its most splendid age was that which was profoundly religious.

Hinduism inspired the Vedas with their Upanishads, wrote the ancient Puranas, lived, and then immortalized in deathless verse, the epics of the *Râmâyana* and the *Mahâbhârata* ; from its fertile womb sprang the six great schools of philosophy, the science of Yoga, the ancient treatises on medicine, on grammar, and astronomy. These writings, which are the admiration and the study of the foremost nations of the present day, for the depth and sublimity of their thought and the stateliness and beauty of their diction, were all flowers on the mighty tree of Indian religion. Later, as religion weakened, India had great commentators, great grammarians of the second order, great philologists ; but these cannot raise a nation to the pinnacle of literary fame. Creative literature, not commentative and imitative literature—India is barren of that today. And she will never again become creative in her literature, any more than she will become exquisitely beautiful in her Art, until religion is incorporated in her education and her children grow to manhood within the inspiration of her faith. . . .

And this is natural. For the nobler part of the human intellect is an aspect of the Spirit in man, and the lower mind contacts the spirit only as it is fed and nourished by religion. As that contact opens the avenues to the Spirit, the Spirit shines down these avenues and illumines the mind. When the mind is illumined by the Spirit, and the brain is able to respond to the swift and subtle vibrations of that mental world, then we have the radiant and splendid manifestation that man calls genius.

Thus great and imperative then, is the necessity for religion as an integral part of education. Do not tell me

that religious training may be given in the home, in voluntary classes, on special occasions. If you leave it out of education, you shut it out of life. The boys will learn the things which are in the educational curriculum, and will treat outside subjects of study . . with indifference, if not with contempt. Nor will they turn in later life to the study ostracized in the school and the college. Then the world will have hardened them ; the social ambition will have fettered them ; the brains will be less plastic, the hearts less warm, than in the eager and passionate days of youth. Life's ideals must be wrought in the soft clay of youth, and they will harden into firm material with maturity. Train your boys and girls in religion, and then only will they become the men and the women that India needs.

See how the great men of your past were religious men. To take even modern times, see how Baber and Akbar were penetrated with the religious spirit. And, later yet, see Shivaji, bowing at the feet of his Guru, ere he drew the sword to free his native land.

Those of you who would have India great, those of you who would see her mighty, remember that the condition of national greatness is the teaching of religion to the young. Teach them to be religious without being sectarian. Teach them to be devoted without being fanatical. Teach them to love their own faith, without decrying or hating the faiths of their fellow-citizens. Make religion a unifying force, not a separative ; make religion a builder-up of nationality, not a disintegrator ; make religion the fostering mother of civic virtues, the nurse and teacher of morality. Then shall the boys and girls grow up into the great citizens of the India

that shall be ; then shall they live in an India, mighty, prosperous, and free ; then shall they look back with gratitude to those who, in the days of darkness, lifted up the light, and gave the religious teaching which alone makes good citizens and great men.

—Lecture delivered 26 February 1908, *The Birth of New India*

## **THE RELIGIOUS DUTIES OF THE STUDENT**

I. *Study of the Doctrines of Religion* : There is no knowledge more necessary for a boy than the knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of his religion. This knowledge should therefore be imparted to him in a simple elementary form in school, and in further detail in college. No controversial points should be raised, no philosophical disquisitions should be imposed ; a clear definite statement of the main doctrines is all that is needed. Half an hour a day throughout school-life would be time sufficient to equip the lad with this knowledge, and to enable him to answer intelligently any questions addressed to him about his religion.

II. *Worship* : Everybody should worship, recognizing with gratitude the Source of life and strength and joy. The Hindu boy should daily perform his Sandhyâ, after bathing, according to the custom of his caste and family ; if he does this, with concentrated attention and devotional feeling, he has fulfilled the duty of worship suitable to his state. He may also, if he likes, read and think over a sloka of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The duty of meditation belongs to later life, and he will gain such training of the mind in steadiness

as is fitted for his youth, by the careful and attentive performance of his Sandhyâ.

III. *The Life of Love* : This is the religious duty which the boy must discharge all day long, and it is this which makes a life a truly religious life whatever may be its occupations. Let us see how a boy should lead the life of love in school and college, the dharma of the student :

He must show his love to his parents and his teachers by diligent study and by prompt obedience. Youth is the time for study, and a youth wasted in idleness cannot later be made good. A man's usefulness to others depends largely on his education ; the ignorant man cannot be a good and wise husband, father, or citizen. A diligent, industrious boy is showing a religious spirit by this diligence and industry ; if he practises these qualities from love and from a sense of duty, he is performing the dharma of his state. And he must be obedient, with the obedience of love, which is as complete out of sight as under the eyes of authority, which is prompt, cheerful and ungrudging, not slothful, carping and unwilling.

He must show his love to those around him by helping them in every way he can ; if he is clever, he should help the dull boys with their lessons ; if he is strong, he should protect the little lads, and never tyrannize over them. He should be brave, gentle, truthful, courteous ; these qualities are all fruits of the fair tree of love. He must be chaste and must always be clean in his own speech and actions ; and he must strongly protest against any coarseness of speech or actions in his fellow-students, and should especially be careful to protect the younger boys from bad talk and bad ways.

A boy who lives in this way during his school and college life, will, when he goes out into the wider world of men, practise there the virtues that in his school and college days he learned as part of his religion. For there is no division between true religion and noble living ; a religion that does not express itself in nobility of living is an empty shell ; a noble life without religion is shorn of its fairest grace.

—1903, *Central Hindu College Magazine*

## THE TRUE OBJECT OF EDUCATION

What after all is the object of Education ?

*To train the body*

in health, vigour and grace, so that it may express the emotions in beauty, and the mind with accuracy and strength.

*To train the emotions*

to love all that is noble and beautiful ;

to sympathize with the joys and sorrows of others ;

to inspire to service ever widening in its area, until we love our elders as our parents, our equals as our brothers and sisters, our youngers as our children, and seek to serve them all ;

to find joy in sacrifice for great causes and for the helpless ;

to feel reverence for all who are worthy of it, and compassion for the outcast and the criminal.

*To evolve and discipline the mind*

in right thinking,

in right discrimination,

in right judgment,

in right memory.

*To subdue body, emotion, and mind to the Spirit, the  
Inner Ruler Immortal,*

making the mind the mirror of the Ego,  
the emotions the mirror of the Intuition,  
the body the expression of the Will.

To put all this in a single sentence :

*To make the man a good Citizen of a free and spiritual  
Commonwealth of Humanity.*

—1926, *India : Bond or Free?*

## **THE EDUCATION OF INDIAN YOUTH**

From the cradle onwards, should come . . . the education of boys and girls . . . from the example and the lips of fathers and mothers who are themselves full of spirituality, thus forming a spiritual atmosphere which shall permeate the dawning mind. No after-training can compensate for the lack of religion in the home, the saturation of children's minds and hearts with pure religion and with the exquisite stories with which Indian literature abounds—tales of heroism, devotion, self-sacrifice, compassion, love, reverence. A man should not be able to remember a time when he was not familiar with the melodious names of Indian Saints and Heroes, both men and women. . . .

An effort should be made to substitute a detailed knowledge of Indian history and geography for the excessive amount of foreign history and geography now learned. A sound and broad knowledge of universal history widens the mind and is necessary for culture, but every man should know in fuller detail the history of his own nation, as such



knowledge not only conduces to patriotism, but also enables a sound judgment to be formed as to the suitability of proposed changes to the national genius. . . . Stories from the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana*, well translated, should form reading-books both in English and in the vernaculars.

Indian history is a thing which seems to be written as though with the object of disgusting every boy who has to pass an examination in it. Nothing more dry, nothing more uninteresting, nothing more uninspiring, than the school histories of India; nothing to enable the people to realize what India was in her far past, in her near past; yet this is of vital importance for the building of character today. How many of your boys and girls know anything really inspiring about the great history of the last two thousand years in India? They may have a few glimpses in their homes of those heroes and saints whose names shine out in the far distant past; but how much do they know of the story of Maharashtra or Rajputana? How much do they know of the great kingdoms of the South, which were mighty and civilized when Europe was still in mediæval barbarism? That is the history that would inspire your boys and girls. . . . You must give Indian boys Indian heroes and not English ones.

Moreover, you must make them realize—most important of all, and for that you will have to rewrite your history—that all the great men of India, no matter what their religion, what their blood, whether they be Musalman or Hindu, that they are all builders of Modern India, and that they have to share in the future building of India. . . . Many forces go to the building, to the making, of a people, and all who have fought and struggled in the past are builders of the Nation

of the present, and our boys should learn to love them all. The Hindu should learn to love Akbar ; the Musalman, Shivaji. Only so will you make them realize that, out of past divisions, a Nation is being born, and we must honour all the strivers of the past who have made possible the splendours of the future.

And your history lessons have also to be remodelled, so as to contain plenty of Indian matter and less of other Nations. Indian boys should learn Indian history chiefly, and the others only to widen out, to strengthen and illuminate the mind.

—Lecture delivered 17 April 1914, *The Birth of New India*

In teaching *Science*, vigilance must be exerted to shut out many of the ways in which some branches of science are taught in Europe. No experiments on living animals should be permitted ; they brutalize the heart and generally mislead the intellect. Reverence for life, compassion, and tenderness to all sentient beings, should be inculcated in the school, by precept and example.

*Moral education* should form part of the curriculum. Daily, in every class, a brief portion of some sacred book should be read and explained, and its moral lesson enforced by illustrations ; their bearing on individual, family, social, and national life should be shown, and the evil results of their opposed vices should be expounded. Occasion should be taken with the elder youths to explain the scientific basis—the basis in nature—on which moral precepts are founded and to point out the wisdom of Hindu religious practices. They will thus acquire an intelligent appreciation of the value of religion and morality.

*Sanskrit* should be a compulsory subject in every school, as Latin is in European schools. It is the mother of many Indian vernaculars and of Pali ; all the greatest treasures of Indian literature are enshrined in it, and a knowledge of it should be a necessary part of the education of every Indian gentleman. Such a knowledge should also serve as a national bond, for a common language is one of the strongest elements in nationality. But it must be taught in the modern way, that a competent knowledge of it, sufficient for reading and conversation, may be acquired in the short time available for learning it. The fashion in which it was taught in more leisurely ages is not suitable to the needs of the time, and even if it be still used for the training of specialists, it can never be adopted as part of the curriculum in modern education. To insist on teaching it only in the old way is to doom *Sanskrit* to extinction as a living language universally known by educated Indians.

... 9 March 1903, *Education as a National Duty*

It is . . . exceedingly important that English should be introduced into *Sanskrit* Schools in which Pandits are trained . . . For the growing gulf between English-educated Indians who know no *Sanskrit* and the Pandits who know no English is a danger alike to religious and national life. These two classes understand each other and sympathize with each other less and less ; and the legitimate influence which religious men should wield over worldly men is an ever-diminishing factor in the national life of India. These classes must be drawn nearer together, and this object will largely be gained by all educated men knowing *Sanskrit*, and all

Pandits, the Samskrit specialists, knowing English and being a little more in touch with Western thought. A course of Western philosophy should form part of a Pandit's education and it would make him all the better able to appreciate and defend the unrivalled philosophic systems in his own literature. Indian thought has influenced the thought of the world, and the effects of this influence should be known and appreciated by those who are its natural custodians. Men, to influence the world, must be in touch with it, and the Pandits are, with each generation, becoming less and less in touch with it, and more and more isolated from their educated countrymen. The difficulty of making Samskrit part of the necessary education of every gentleman is much overrated. Every Muhammadan gentleman knows Arabic, and can read the *Koran*. Why should the Hindu be more backward in reading the *Vedas*? To be ignorant of the language in which all his religious ceremonies are performed is to be doomed to irreligion or to unintelligent religion, and such ignorance should be regarded as disgraceful to a man claiming to be educated.

Hindu boarding-houses should be established wherever there are school and college students who come from a distance, and these should be conducted on religious lines ; the boys being taught there to observe their religious duties as if living in the atmosphere of a religious Indian home. Here again Muhammadans are ahead of us in their care for the religious training of the young, for such Muhammadan boarding-houses are found near colleges attended by Muhammadan students, whereas Hindu boys are ruthlessly exposed to purely secular or even proselytizing influences at

the very time when they are most impressible. Are there no wealthy Hindus who care enough for their faith and their country to help in the care and protection of the young ?

—March 1897, *Theosophist*

It is an honourable and ancient rule of Samskrit teaching that the pupils should be taught without fees. Any innovation on this ought to be resisted if you wish to keep up the revived ancient feelings . . . Every son of India who desires to know the ancient tongue should find teaching open to him without the necessity for payment, as it was in the ancient days ; and not only so, but there ought to be provision made for the maintenance of the students, so that they may be able to pursue their studies without any anxiety, and may be able to learn in order to be fitted to teach afterwards what they have learnt.

—1901, *India*

## **THE EDUCATION OF THE INDIAN GIRL**

Let us turn to the education of girls, the future wives and mothers of Hindus, those on whom the welfare of the family, and therefore largely the welfare of the nation, depends. Until the last two or three generations the education of Hindu girls was by no means neglected. They were trained in religious knowledge and were familiar with the great Indian epics and with much of the Puranas, to say nothing of the vernacular religious literature. They would learn by heart thousands of lines of these, and would also have stored in their memory many *stotras*. Hence their children were cradled in an atmosphere full of devotion, fed

on sacred songs and stories. Further, they were thoroughly trained in household economy, in the management of the house, and the knowledge of the duties of dependents and servants. They were skilled in medicine and were the family doctors, and many were highly skilled in artistic needlework and music.

If a woman knows medicine, if she knows the value of foodstuffs, if she knows how to deal with the difficulties of a large household, if she has learnt literature by listening to it, not necessarily by reading it, such a woman is a truly educated woman, whether or not she has passed any examinations or holds any University degrees. And that education was very largely spread among those aged grandmothers and great-grandmothers of the immediate past.

—17 April 1914, *The Birth of New India*

Their education was directed to fit them to discharge their functions in life, to render them competent to fulfil the weighty duties belonging to them in Indian family life. This "old-fashioned education" has now almost entirely disappeared, and the present generation is for the most part singularly incompetent and helpless, too often trivial and childish, unable to train sons and daughters in the noble simplicity and dignity of true Hindu life.

To remedy this admitted deterioration, attempts are being made to introduce "female education," but unhappily, the kind of education mostly essayed, being founded on the needs of Western life, is mischievous rather than beneficial to Indian womanhood. . . . The higher education of women in England and America is mainly directed to fitting

women to compete with men as bread-winners in the various professions and Government employment. . . . Needless to say that in India there is no prospect of such a complete revolution in social life as would break up the family system, drive the women out into the world to earn bread and make them competitors with men in every walk of life. The province of women in India is still the home ; such a thing as an unmarried girl is scarcely known, and the joint family system offers a secured shelter to every girl and woman of the family. Their life is a family life, of what avail then to waste the years during which they should be educated to play their part well in the family, in giving them an education suited for Western social life but entirely unsuited to their own ? The school-life of the girl in India must necessarily be brief, and it is therefore the more important that she should spend that brief time to the best possible advantage. . . .

When parents wish their daughters to follow the same course of education as their sons, they can readily secure for them that which they desire. But the *national* movement for the education of girls must be one which meets the national needs and India needs nobly trained wives and mothers, wise and tender rulers of the household, educated teachers of the young, helpful counsellors of their husbands, skilled nurses of the sick, rather than girl-graduates, educated for the learned professions.

Let us, then, put down in order the essentials of the education which is desirable for Indian girls.

1. *Religious and Moral Education* : But above all else must the Indian girl be trained in the devotion and piety to

which her nature so readily responds. Not only should she read, but she should learn by heart, stories and poems from the best Indian literature, *stotras*, and sacred verses. No girl should leave school without becoming familiar with the *Bhagavad Gita*, and knowing much, if not all of it, by heart. . . .

Every girl must be taught the fundamental doctrines of her religion in a clear, simple, and rational method. *The Sanatana Dharma Series I and II*, in the vernaculars, will suit Hindu girls as well as Hindu boys, and girls thoroughly grounded in these will be able to study the *Advanced Text-Book* after leaving school, as they are not likely to remain there to an age fit for such study. The *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana*, in the vernaculars, should be largely drawn on for moral instruction, as well as *Manu-Smṛiti*, and Tulsī Das' *Rāmāyana* should be read by all Hindi-knowing girls. . Girls belonging to the Islamic and Zoroastrian faiths should be similarly instructed, the books of their respective religions taking the place of the Hindu works named above. There is an abundant wealth of beautiful devotional verse in Persian, to culture and elevate the mind of the Muslim girl, to whom also should be opened the stores of Arabic learning. The Zoroastrian has also ample sacred treasures for the instruction of his girls, and can utilize selections from the *Avesta*, Pahlavi, and Persian. . .

They should be taught to worship, and simple plain explanations of the worship followed should be given, and, while the devotion so natural to an Indian woman should be nurtured, an intelligent understanding should be added to it, and a pure and enlightened faith, their natural heritage,



should be encouraged in them. Where any girl shows capacity for deeper thought, philosophical studies and explanations should not be withheld from her, so that opportunity may be afforded for the re-appearance of the type of which Maitreyi and Gargi and the women singers of the Vedas were shining examples. . . .

All the great heroines of Indian story should be made familiar to her with their 'inspiring example and elevating influence. The Indian ideal of womanhood should be made living to her in these heroic figures, and she should be taught to regard them as her exemplars in her own life. With heart thus trained and memory thus stored, she will be fit to be the "Lakshmi of the House," and the hearts of husband and children will safely trust in her. Girls thus educated will make the Indian home what it ought to be—the centre of spirituality, the strength of the national religious life. Among them we may hope to see revived the glories of the past, the tenderness and fidelity of Sita and Savitri, the intellectual grandeur of Gargi, the all-sacrificing spirituality of Maitreyi. . . .

II. *Literary Education*: A sound literary knowledge of the Vernacular should be given, both in reading and writing. Vernacular literature, in Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Marathi, Gujerati, Telugu, and Tamil, is sufficiently rich in original works and translations to give full scope for study, and to offer a store of enjoyment for the leisure hours of later life. A colloquial knowledge of some Vernacular other than her own would be useful to a girl, if time would allow of the learning. A classical language, Samskrit or Arabic or Persian, according to the girl's religion,

should be learned sufficiently to read with pleasure the noble literature contained therein, and the quick Indian girl will readily master sufficient of one of these tongues to prove a never-failing delight to her in her womanhood, and to listen with intelligent pleasure to the reading of her husband as he enjoys the masterpieces of the great writers.

Indian history and Indian geography should be thoroughly taught. . . . serving as a basis for future study. It might also, in the higher classes, include the broad outlines of universal history and geography, and of the greatest literary masterpieces of foreign nations. . . . While their minds will be thus widened and their ideas enlarged, at the same time they will be led along lines purely national and in consonance with immemorial ideals. If the Westernizing, in a bad sense, of Indian men be undesirable, still more undesirable is such Westernizing of the Indian women ; the world cannot afford to lose the pure, lofty, tender, and yet strong, type of Indian womanhood. It is desirable, also, seeing how much English thought is dominating the minds of the men, and how many sympathetic Englishwomen seek to know their Indian sisters, that the girls should learn English, and have thus opened to them the world of thought outside India ; in later life they may make many a pleasant excursion into that world in the company of their husbands, and the larger horizons will interest without injuring.

III. *Scientific Education* : Nothing is more necessary to the Indian wife and mother, ruler often of a household that is a little village, than

1. *A knowledge of sanitary laws*

The hygiene of the household should be thoroughly taught, the value of fresh air, sunlight and scrupulous cleanliness; these were, indeed, thoroughly understood and practised by the elder generation, and must still, if learned in the school-room, find their field of practice in the home; but the latest generation seems to be in all this far behind its grandmothers.

## 2. *The value of food-stuffs*

Essential again is a knowledge of the value of foodstuffs, and of their effect on the body in the building of muscular, nervous, and fatty tissues, of their stimulative or nutrient qualities.

## 3. *Simple medicines, "first aid" in accidents, nursing the sick*

Some knowledge of simple medicines is needed by every mother, that she may not be incessantly calling in a doctor. . . . She should be thoroughly instructed in medicine, botany, the preparation and use of herbs. . . . She should also be able to deal with accidental injuries, completely with slight ones, and sufficiently with serious ones to prevent loss of life while awaiting the surgeon's coming; simple nursing every girl should learn, and the importance of accuracy in observing directions, keeping fixed hours for food and medicine, etc.

## 4. *Cookery of the more delicate kind*

A knowledge of cookery has always been part of the education of the Indian housewife, and this should still have its place in education, or there will be little comfort in the houses for husband and children. The Indian cook—like

cooks in other countries—does his work all the better if the house-mother is able to supervise and correct.

5. *Household management, and the keeping of accounts*

Sufficient arithmetic should be learned for all household purposes, for quick and accurate calculation of quantities and prices, and the keeping of accounts.

IV. *Artistic Education*: Instruction in some art should form part of the education for a girl, so that leisure in later life may be pleasantly and adequately filled, instead of being wasted in gossip and frivolity. South India is leading the way in musical education, and the prejudice against it is disappearing. The singing of *stotras*, to an accompaniment on the *vina*, or other instrument, is a refining and delightful art in which the girls take the greatest pleasure, and one which enables them to add greatly to the charm of home. Drawing and painting are arts in which some find delight, and their deft fingers readily learn . . . artistic embroidery and needlework of all kinds. . . . The exquisite Indian embroidery . . . with its delicately shaded gradations of colour and its graceful forms . . . trains the eye and the taste. Needless to say that all should learn sewing, darning and the cutting-out of such made-garments as are used in their districts. In all of these, the natural taste of the pupil should be the guide to the selection of the art, though almost all, probably, will take part in singing.

V. *Physical Education*: The training and strengthening of the bodies of the future mothers must not be left out of sight, and, to this end, physical exercises of a suitable kind

should form part of the school curriculum. In Southern India, the girls are very fond of exercises in which they move to the sound of their own songs, performing often complicated exercises, in some of which patterns are woven and unwoven in coloured threads. . . All these are good; and there are games which give exercise of a pleasant and active kind. These conduce to the health of young bodies, and give grace of movement, removing all awkwardness. Nothing is prettier than to see a group of girls moving gracefully to the sound of their own young voices, in and out, in mazy evolutions, with clapping of soft palms or clash of light playing-sticks. The lack of physical exercise leads to many chronic ailments in womanhood and to premature old age.

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Such is an outline of the education which would, it seems to me, prove adequate to the needs of the young daughters of India, and would train them up into useful and cultured women, heads of happy households, "lights of the home."

There will always be some exceptional girls, who need for the due evolution of their faculties a more profound and a wider education, and these must be helped to what they need as individuals, each on her own line. Such girls may be born into India in order to restore to her the learned women of the past, and to place again in her diadem the long lost pearl of lofty female intelligence. It is not for any to thwart them in their upward climbing, or to place unnecessary obstacles in their path.

Of this we may be sure, that Indian greatness will not return until Indian womanhood obtains a larger, a freer, and

a fuller life, for largely in the hands of Indian women must lie the redemption of India. The wife inspires or retards the husband ; the mother makes or mars the child. The power of woman to uplift or debase man is practically unlimited, and man and woman must walk forward hand-in-hand to the raising of India, else will she never be raised at all. The battle for religious and moral education of boys is won, although the victory has still to be made effective all over India. The battle for the education of girls is just beginning, and may Ishvara bless those who are the vanguard, and all beneficent Powers enlighten their minds and make strong their hearts !

—Lectures delivered 1897 and 1904, *The Birth of New India*

## **THE FAILURE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

The aim of Education at the present time in India appears to be the gaining of a degree, and when you ask : “ Why do people want a degree ? ” the answer is : “ That they may go into Government service or into the learned professions.” A man becomes a Bachelor of Arts not that he may know literature, not that he may understand history, not that he may be a student of philosophy, but that he may be a Vakil or a Government servant. Now the getting of a degree is not the true aim of Education. The aim of Education is to draw out all the faculties of the boy on every side of his nature, to develop in him every intellectual and moral power, and to strengthen him physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, that he may turn out

at the end of his College career a useful, patriotic, pious gentleman, who respects himself and respects those around him. Education is a failure when it is simply cramming the boy's head with a lot of disjointed facts, poured into his head as into a basket, to be emptied out again in the examination room, and the empty basket carried out again into the world. It is not a good education which, when a boy has passed his examination, leaves him a nervous wreck, exhausted as to his body and overstrained as to his brain. When a boy goes out of his college, he should be full of life, full of energy, and full of delight in his young life, to take up the burden of the work of the world. He should not be nerve-exhausted and nerve-overstrained, when he has finished his educational career. I have often seen boys so anxious about the result of the examination that they were ill. In some cases, when lads failed in their examination they committed suicide. That is a horrible thing—a shocking commentary on the pressure that was put on the lad's young and tender frame. To exhaust the strength, to destroy the energy, to turn out a sickly, worn-out man, when the youth should be brimming over with life, has been the result of the system of Education prevalent in the land.

—Lecture delivered 9 March 1903, *The Birth of New India*

## **INDIANIZE THE SCHOOL**

It is not customary for young children—boys and girls and especially girls—to be perched on long benches with their little legs dangling and not able to touch the ground. It is bad from the standpoint of health and it is uncomfortable

and they are unaccustomed to it. We propose to introduce nice little mats with little low tables on which books can be put, and there will not be the strain of unaccustomed and foreign ways of fitting a child to a bench. Mother earth fits every body and that is a great advantage of sitting on the ground. If they have little chowkies they will be far more comfortable than they are at present and far more healthy. It is in that kind of direction that we shall move in Indianizing the school. When you come here a little later, you will see the little girls dressed in their beautiful National costume with the saree, and not in the way in which they are dressed at present. It is a mistake to copy foreign fashions when you have beautiful fashions. For over a quarter of a century I have set my face against ugly copies of half-English dress. We shall try to get the children here to honour their country and follow her ways and to grow up to be the mothers, wives, and guides of truly Indian homes. That will be our object in education to help the girls to grow up and to be what the Indian woman used to be and still to a very large extent is, but adding to that such an amount of the culture which her husband follows that she may be able to be what an Indian woman was in the past—a sympathizer with him in the whole of his life. That is the ideal which we shall put before ourselves.

—10 July 1918, *New India*

Two things I do not like : the wearing of the English dress by the Indian girls and the use of the Harmonium. The English dress is not hygienic and spoils the beauty, and the harmonium spoils the voice. Indian girls must wear beautiful



Indian sarees. Give your girls the Indian atmosphere at home and at school. English painters . . . very much like to paint an Indian lady in her Indian dress.

—21 January 1918, *New India*

## **ORGANIZING NATIONAL EDUCATION**

“ You may dig your gold wherever you like—in Australia, America, or India—but you must stamp it in the Indian Mint.”

—21 January 1918, *New India*

Passing to education, there an immense amount has been done and far more has yet to be done. . . We have only begun the very A.B.C. of the educational reform which is necessary in order to make India what she should be. . . Education is a matter that belongs to the nation when understood. Fathers and guardians are the people who ought to fashion the national education. How long have I been urging upon you to take this matter of education into your own hands, and not leave it for others to guide and plan. . . The things that make a nation great, from the material standpoint, are not the learned professions and Government service, but scientific agriculture, well-devised manufactures, thoughtfully planned arts and crafts, and the innumerable forms of workmanship that go to the building up of national wealth. But along the lines on which education has been carried on, this has been left on one side, and mind you, the blame for that does not lie on the Government; it lies on the people. . . If, instead of sending your boys to Government college and missionary schools, you

built your own schools, and had your own teachers, you might guide education exactly as you would.

### *Fertilizing Charity*

It is not that there is not money enough in the country. I know it is said that India is poor ; so she is, in a sense, poor, that is, as regards the masses of her people. But not too poor to build colleges and schools for your children while you are able to maintain, as you are doing, large crowds of men as mendicants, in the full strength of vigorous life, who are innocent of all sacred learning, innocent of the light, who have nothing of the Sannyasi but the cloth that covers them, and who are yet fed and sheltered by the crore. India is not poor so long as your Chettiers and Banias can give lakhs upon lakhs of rupees for the restoration of ancient temples and the gilding of their pinnacles. You do not need to increase your charities ; that is not wanted ; but oh ! if you would only turn them into channels that fertilize instead of channels that corrupt, India would have wealth enough to educate her sons and daughters, and to make possible a new life in the future.

I do not speak against the restoration of temples. That is well. It is well that man should worship, rightly, nobly and rationally. . . But I do speak against the mere restoration that leaves the priesthood ignorant and profligate. I do speak against the restoration of a temple where no school lives under its shadow, and where children are not taught by those whose duty it is to teach—less gilding on the pinnacles of temples, and more gilding of learning in the hearts of boys and girls. And if you would still keep your

temples in order, but spend some of the money that is wasted on vast crowds of idle mendicants on the education of your children, how rapidly would India rise in the scale of nations, and how quickly she would claim her right place among the peoples of the world. . . .

### ***Begin at the Right End.***

I urged upon you the formation of Educational Boards in every district of India. Now Government has nothing to do with that. You do not need to ask for Government permission or authority. You have only to gather a few of your cleverest men and Princes together and make them into an Educational Board for a definitely outlined area. What is wanted is not Government help. It is your work. What is wanted is self-devotion, energy, initiative, the willingness to go through years of drudgery, for only in that way can true education be built up. This has not yet been acted on. The idea, when spoken about anywhere, causes a good deal of cheering, but only in a few places has there been any real earnest work, even in starting an Indian school. [Referring to the protests that had followed the passing of the Education Act.] Such protests are necessary, but they should be followed by action, for thought that is not followed by action acts like a gangrene in the human mind. Better remain silent, better not even think, if you are not prepared to act ; . . . for in the higher spheres, as you know, thought produces action ; down here, thought, and especially talk, without action does not get a nation very far along the line of progress. So all the energy flows out in the talk, and nothing is done. . . . I

am glad [the Act] has passed, because it has—I hope it has—given the impulse which will make men take the education of their children into their own hands.

But now, how? By beginning at the right end and not at the wrong. First, by making your Educational Boards all over the country; next by creating colleges and Universities, and most of all making such a public opinion, especially among the Indian Princes, the 'great merchants, and employers of labour, as shall induce them to recognize the degrees given by the Indian Universities as valid credentials for those who are seeking employment. Until you have done that, you have done nothing. It is no good even making a University, unless you have made a body of people who are prepared to take its graduates when they have taken their degrees, and thus open to them means of livelihood. It is no good beginning with boys. You must begin with men. . . .

What you should do in Madras, and do at once, is to begin the formation of a great organization of leading, wealthy, influential people, who will give employment to your boys, if need be, when the pinch comes, and Government refuses to recognize your colleges or Universities. I believe in Indian Universities for Indians, where Indian degrees shall be given in Arts, and Science, and in Industries that are useful for the national unfolding.

—1910, *India's Awakening*

. . . . Wherever I am, I do my own work, which is God's work. . . . People give me money, and to me they are God's agents. Money comes because I do not want it for myself, and it is only the empty hands that are filled by God. As

Sri Krishna said: "When I have stripped a man of everything, then I give him Myself." And where Sri Krishna is, there is power, there is wealth, and there is victory. That is what I mean by a life of Service.

## ***A BALANCED EDUCATION***

### ***Classical***

Arabic and Samskrit, these are the two classical languages for India, not Latin and Greek. Instead of French or German, you should teach English and one vernacular, one common language which would serve everywhere as a means of communication between educated and uneducated alike. . . . If you had Samskrit or Arabic according to the religion of the boy, Hindi as a common tongue, a thorough knowledge of his own vernacular, and then the necessary English for all dealings with foreign countries, and in Government and Court matters, you would have an education, so far as languages are concerned, that would make a boy ready for the future, and enable him to take up his work in the world as soon as he goes into it.

### ***Technical***

The most important thing, which I have often urged, is *Technical Education*, and, above all, thorough education in agriculture. . . . Famines are preventible things, and things that ought to be prevented. But they can only be prevented by a wiser system of agriculture on the one hand, and by the building up of manufacturing industries throughout the land on the other. \*

But, mind you, the manufactures that you want are the manufactures of this country. Here arts and crafts are fast dying. Your weaving craft is dying out of existence, because its products are not bought. That brings me to the next point, for education here slips into economics. Why is it that the weavers of cloths, the potters, and metal workers, and the makers of beautiful objects of all kinds, the weavers of shawls in Kashmir, and of muslins and silks in other parts of the land, why are they slowly disappearing? These people, who by heredity are fitted for the work, are swelling the ranks of the agricultural labourers, starving the land and overcrowding the fields. Why this? Because for many years you have been wearing foreign goods in preference to home-made ones. . . . Fashion has been more powerful than patriotism. Now, thanks to the Partition of Bengal, poor patriotism has a chance. But the present enthusiasm for Swadeshi goods will only be a flare like the blaze of twigs, easily lighted and quickly dying out, unless a principle underlies the movement and not a passing political irritation. No durable things are built on violent passion. Nature grows her plants in silence and in darkness, and only when they have become strong do they put their heads above the ground. . . . Without home manufactures, there is no prosperity; without home manufactures, there are recurring famines; without home manufactures, there are overcrowded, unproductive professions and undermanned industrial pursuits . . . Help this movement in every way that you can, save by ways that are wrong, for remember that the Devas are behind all national policies, and therefore that the wrong way is always the long way, and useless.

. . . Be a little patient. . . . Governments are not perfect, any more than the governed. After all, Governments are only men, just as you are, with the same faults and the same short-sightedness. Therefore the Government should learn to be patient with the governed and the governed with the Government. . . . Politics are constantly changing, one burning question today and another tomorrow. Go on quietly and steadily without any fuss, building up your Indian manufactures, educating your sons. You think brains are wanted for pleading ; much more are brains wanted for carrying on large agricultural and industrial concerns. We want the brightest brains for the building up of Indian industries at the present time. If an Indian Prince wants to have an electrical plant installed in his capital, he has to go to Europe to find an engineer who will set up for him his electrical machinery. That must be so until you educate your boys on the right lines. Educate them on all the lines of learning wanted to make a nation great. . . . A calling which helps national prosperity is more respectable than a calling which does not. That is a lesson that has to be learned in modern India. . . .

—1910, *India's Awakening*

In giving technical education more completely, do not forget that you must have employment for your own educated men, and that you must make a public opinion which will cry shame on the Indian prince or the Indian man of wealth who gives preference to the foreigner rather than to the man of his own country when he is equally well educated. . . .

—17 April 1914, *The Birth of New India*

.... What is really needed is to make education cheap, widespread, scientific, literary, and technical : to change the policy which draws the intelligent Indians only into Government service, and to get them to take up other lines of work which affect the economic future of their country ; to educate them in arts and manufactures ; not to leave the direction of industry to people who are of the ruling nation, but to draft into industrial undertakings large members of the educated classes—that is the kind of education that is wanted, and the kind of education that England does not give to India, and will not let India give to herself.

—1903, *England and India*

## **INDIA MUST NOT LOSE HER HERITAGE**

In the East the rationale of the education of the child has a sound philosophical and natural basis. The child comes into the hands of the teacher with a character which it is the teacher's duty to mould according to the child's tastes and tendencies. A child is not an empty bucket into which education is to pour a large number of facts to be poured out again in an examination-room. The wise way of teaching a child is to have a play-room instead of a schoolroom which carries with it an uncomfortable idea. A child learns by play in happiness and in joyfulness what he used to learn with difficulty and struggle and sometimes with pain in school.

The senses in a child are very much alive. The sensible thing is to cultivate the sense-organs at a time when they are most active, keen, and receptive of impressions. Obviously, in the whole plan of teaching, the vernacular



must be the medium of instruction. To teach facts to a child in a foreign language is so absurd that no one but a person in a lunatic asylum would think of it. In no country except India and Poland is education carried on in a foreign language. Teaching facts to a child in a foreign tongue injures the brain of the child. The difficulty in making the change is not with the teachers but with the parents and guardians of boys. It is a most foolish system of education whereby a boy learns facts without understanding the relationship of those facts to life. A foreign tongue cannot appeal to the feelings of a boy as his mother-tongue can. English may be taught to Indian boys as a second language, but you do not want the English of Chaucer or Addison.

In India too much has been made of examinations. The test of a boy who has been in school for several years, and has been four years in a college, is his knowledge, and the only test of that knowledge is gained by keeping a record of his study. A boy's teachers are the best judges of his capacity and not some stray man who comes from another place and sets conundrums. A much wiser course would be if boys were examined by their own teachers according to a standard set by someone from outside. The whole plan of education up to the time of examinations in India is wrong.

There might be examinations in a very limited way, but the years of training should weigh more than the few hours in the examination room. . . .

Spiritual nature is innate in Indians and what they want are manly, virile qualities, initiative, quick judgment, prompt determination, and, above all, courage to face opposition, to endure, strive, and persevere, and such qualities are not

encouraged in any Government or missionary institutions of today.

Another thing for which we want National Education is to inculcate feelings of patriotism among Indian boys, pride in their country, pride in their mighty civilization, pride in the antiquity of their race, and pride in the glory won in the past. Patriotism is not popular and an Indian boy is not allowed to exercise independent thinking ; he is to think only of the blessings of British Rule. Indians must teach history to their boys as it is and not as Englishmen write it. If they really thought of the future of India as that future ought to be, they would not allow their boys to be twisted and distorted as they are today.

India has a priceless heritage that she must not lose for the sake of the world at large. At this time we are standing on the threshold of a change which will revolutionize the life of the country, and by the training we ought to be giving in our schools today will the India of the future be shaped and made great among the Nations. Indian boys are not being prepared now to bear the weight of responsibility which will devolve on them as citizens of their country. They are being brought up as if they were always to remain as slaves and were not free men and free citizens. . . . I hope that the education that is given to Indian sons and daughters on National lines will make them worthy of the India that will soon come amongst us. Nothing is more glorious than that there should be springing up in India schools where patriotism is the atmosphere and devotion to the Motherland is the ideal of service. . . .

—26 March 1918, *New India*

## ***HOW TO REBUILD THE NATION***

The East India Company Rule gradually reduced India to extreme poverty, and poverty is the mother of ignorance. From a literate and religious Nation, the admiration of the world, India slowly became illiterate and sceptical, and thus lost her high place among the Nations.

A Master has remarked that India degenerated slowly and must also slowly regain her position. The greater the reason for beginning the climbing at once. With what shall we begin? I think with the education of the young, before their inborn tendencies have been distorted by foreign ways. Free and compulsory education must be started under Indian control, and in the Indian tongue spoken in the home; in this all the early education must be given. No foreign language should be used as the medium for teaching in primary education. This free and compulsory education must be established without further delay, and primary education must, as said, be given in the vernacular of the children. No self-governing Nation uses a foreign language as the medium of teaching in primary education.

Before the British ruled India, her people were an educated people, and travellers from neighbouring countries came to see her marvels. The reports of these travellers bear testimony to the respect felt for her people and to the fact that there was "a school in every village" as late as 1813. (See the Report of India sent to the British Parliament in that year.) A foreign Government naturally prefers that its subjects should remain ignorant; for an ignorant people may riot when their sufferings become intolerable in any

part of the country, but they cannot combine to break the foreign yoke. A revolution of hunger is but a series of temporary riots, and these are inevitably crushed by a well-fed, healthy, and well-disciplined army. The fear of such a catastrophe in India has haunted me like a nightmare for years. Our first duty, then, should be to take over primary education and rebuild it on National lines ; also a few striking sayings of the great religious Teachers should be used to open and to close the schools. Let us give the highest of each religion as representing it best. The little *Universal Text-Book of Religion* is very useful for this object.

There is a great teaching which has been put most forcibly in Christianity : “ He that is greatest is he that doth serve.” “ Behold ! ” said the Christ, “ I am among you as he that serveth.” We might fairly urge that Service should be the leading characteristic of a truly National Education.

—20 August 1931, *New India*

## **A SYSTEM OF NATIONAL EDUCATION**

Our method . . . is to classify each part of Education in . . . four departments, Physical,\* Emotional, Mental, and Spiritual. . . .

We would divide up the life of a student into certain distinct parts :

### ***Up to 14 Years—General Education***

*Up to 5 years of age :* Training at Home during which the physical body is to be developed, and his emotions to be turned to the unselfish side instead of the selfish one.

We hold that the training, the nurture, the nourishing of the body is the chief thing for a young child.

*From 5 years to 7 :* A training in Primary school based on the child's desires, the child's curiosity, the child's questions, for thus you find what the child likes, what he wants to know, and along what lines his faculties lead him. To such schools children come very gladly . . . because they are going to a place where they are happy, and where, in that happiness, true education is possible.

*From 7 to 10 years :* The child should be in the Lower Secondary School.

*From 10 to 14* in the Higher Secondary. These seven years see the growth of the emotional nature, the mind also developing but being dominated by emotion. From 10 years of age should come the training of the feelings, which is so vital for the future, so that the surging emotions which accompany and follow puberty may be directed and brought under control instead of poisoning the life. The moral teaching is directed to the developing of the virtues which make the good man and the good citizen. The physical education includes, for the individual in relation to his body, instruction in the physiology of sex—plant, animal, human—the individual and National need of Brahmacharya in student life, the danger of errors in the great transition from boyhood to manhood. The body to be trained in muscular strength, hardness, and athletics, before the danger-zone is entered. Indian exercises to be practised daily. Carpentry basket-work and the use of tools to be practised. First Aid to be taught. In the relation to the outer world, the individual must learn his duty to the Motherland of making

and keeping vigorous health. The self-control of true manliness, the training of the playground in co-operation, discipline, obedience, and the leadership of merit—all are important. From very childhood the eye, the ear, and the mind, is trained. Make the boy a complete and useful citizen of the country, so that he begins to love the work he does, and one sees how in a few months the faculties develop surprisingly.

### ***After 14 Years—Specialization***

Through two years in

- (1) An Ordinary High School, with its Art, Science and Teachers' Training Division ;
- (2) Commercial High School ;
- (3) Technical High School ;
- (4) Agricultural High School.

A year of University Preparatory Work. Three years in the University, if the students are to go still further.

A requisite for advancement into collegiate grade—that the student should be shown how to do things which afterwards he will continue to study.

***Underprivileged Children*** must go into special schools where they will be taught the elements of civilization, of decent living, and only when they have reached a suitable stage will they then go along with the others.

—1919, *Problems of Reconstruction*

## **IN INDIAN HANDS**

The most important point from the standpoint of National Education is that education must be in Indian hands and under Indian control, because you will be able to judge the character you desire to develop in your boys and girls better than any one else can do. So you will notice that in the Board of National Education it is Indians who fill it, with the only exception of myself and Mr. Arundale, and the moment somebody else is ready to take our place, both of us will be willing to clear out. —12 March 1918, *New India*

## **INDIA IS HERSELF**

National Education must meet the National temperament at every point and develop the National character. India is not to become a lesser—nor even a greater—England but to evolve into a mightier India. British ideals are good for Britain, but it is India's ideals that are good for India. We do not want echoes nor monotones; we want a choral melody of Nations, mirroring the varied qualities of Nature and of God. Shall Nature show but a single colour, and trees, and flowers, and mountains, and sky, wear but a single hue? Harmonious variety and not monotony is the mark of perfection.

Away with all apologies for India, with all deprecatory explanations of India's ways, and customs, and traditions. India is Herself, and needs not to be justified, for verily God has evolved no greater, no more exquisite Nationality than India's among all the broken reflections of His own Perfect Beauty.

—9 April 1918, *New India*

## ***A NATIONAL UNIVERSITY***

The first ideal of a National University is that of service to the Motherland, the training of the national character. . . . The next great ideal is that it must be a centre of an all-round Culture for the Nation. By culture I mean knowledge plus emotion. A man should be trained in emotion by music, by drama, by poetry, by literature, etc. They are all needed to produce culture. They purify the emotions. Where intelligence and emotion are balanced and both active, the man is truly cultured. The National University must also be a centre of Research, must be a centre of men trained to develop knowledge and to desire knowledge for its own sake. . . . The University has also a duty to the Nation. It should communicate to the adults of the Nation, in a form more popular than the teaching and training in a college, in comparatively untechnical language, the results of research . . . so that they may keep themselves abreast with the knowledge of the day. . . . The University should set a standard of education . . . and by its own methods it should discourage false lines of education and encourage good lines. There must be in the future at least one university for each of the great vernaculars.

On this the whole of National Education turned. . . . We should throw open the way from the village school to the University. A degree or diploma should be based not on the results of a particular examination but on the result of the study of the student through the whole period of which that examination was the close. Students' merit should not be judged by strange examiners, by somebody outside the



College but by the Professors themselves. A University Professor might be added to the Board of Examiners in each subject. . . . From the elementary school right up there should be a double line of teaching, intellectual teaching and practical manual training. . . . The training of the senses is as essential as the training of the brain. . . .

The elder men have to train the younger men as citizens of a free country to prepare them for the heavy burden of national responsibility, to make them strong physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Hence the necessity for National Education. —1 March 1918, *New India*

(From a lecture in the Gokhale Hall, Madras, on "The Place of the University in National Reform")

Do you want a denominational or a National University? Will you have a University built up by Hindus for Hindus, another by Musalmans for Musalmans, and another perhaps by Parsis for Parsis, and so on; or will you have a system of a National University which shall affiliate alike denominational and undenominational colleges? I am in favour of a National University and not a denominational University. I am in favour of denominational schools or colleges, but a National University that unites them together.

—21 January 1906, Calcutta, reprinted January 1918, *New India*

[*Dr. Besant dreamed of a great National University with daughter colleges in all the great cities in the land "wherein the great gulf between the West and the East could be bridged, wherein its students will know the West without becoming aliens from their ancestral faith."*]

It is the mightiest enterprise for which I ask your sympathy, your goodwill, and your financial aid. I know that it will

succeed, because the blessings of the Great Ones are on it. I know it will succeed, because it is for the benefit of the future of India, which is at the heart of every one of us. But that future depends on Indians, and on no other people and on no other country. The Indian nation will not grow by the influence of any other nation, but by the growth of character within India's own boundary. England can never make you free. You can only make yourselves free by becoming noble and upright, brave and true. Nations made of such men *must* be free. Your destiny lies in your own hands. Your future is to be of your creating. You must build the basis of noble character, and of the public spirit which shows itself in true citizenship. You must prove yourselves worthy to be a part of a mighty Empire . . . India must be governed on the basis of Indian feelings, Indian traditions, Indian thought, and Indian ideas. That is true.

It is possible that if India only grows up to the height of her possibilities, the time will come when she will send her best and noblest counsellors to take their part in a great Imperial Council gathered round the Monarch for the ruling of the Empire. I dream of a time when India will help to build the Empire with that genius for statesmanship and clear insight which are found from time to time in great Indian ministers. These qualities will be utilized for the good of the Empire, for the good of the mighty whole of which India is a part. The times are gone by for small nations, for petty States, and for little peoples. The tendency now is towards raising a vast realm, united by common aims and common love. India in the future should aid to build such an Empire, should help to bear its burdens and share its

responsibilities. I dream of a time when India, England, Australasia, and Canada will all join hands in the making of a common Empire, when India's children will bring their priceless treasures to the enriching of that Empire. But for this her children must first build their character, for without that they will never be able to accomplish aught.

—9 March 1903, *Education as a National Duty*

## THE MOTHER TONGUE

I can think of no young generation happier than the present. It is the leaders today who are battling for the freedom of the Motherland, and it is the younger men who will inherit the power and the responsibility that the victory of the leaders will secure to India. Not into the hands of the elder fighters will pass as it were, the spoils of the victory. They fight for the future, not for themselves; although they know that in a later generation they also should return to the land that they have liberated in order to enjoy the blessings which in the present life they struggle for. But it is on the young men of today, the young men in schools and colleges, the young men at present scarcely known at the Bar, the young men who will carry on the industry, trade and commerce, that will fall the glorious responsibility of freedom, and it is on them the country looks with eyes of hope and eagerness. It is no light thing to be a citizen of a country that is free. Many of us may think of the joy and the glory of it. It is well to remember the burden and the responsibility. On the free citizen in a free State lies the whole welfare of the country, and as he lives, so will the country prosper. As he leads and guides, so

shall the country go forward among the Nations of the world; as he develops wisdom and courage, so shall his country rise in the scale of Nations. To that great end, there lies on the younger generation, especially those who are still in school and college, that supreme duty of service. There are things that the young men can do which the elders are too much occupied to perform. The study of the condition of the 'country, the going about among the poor, the learning how the poor live, making friends with them, trying to alleviate their sufferings and teaching them to uplift themselves—these are all the practical ways in which social service could be rendered. The young men must study their vernaculars and make them the media of their thought and daily actions in life. They must realize that the mother tongue is the great instrument for the uplift of the country, and that no foreign tongue can ever reach the people as well as their vernacular language which moves their emotions and thrills their hearts. Our younger men, while still in their schools and colleges, should study their vernacular and have it as the medium of full expression. It is not true that modern thought cannot be expressed in the vernacular of the provinces—vernaculars in which a great literature exists, so great enough and rich enough as to touch the spring of patriotism, to inspire the hearts of the people, and to make them realize their dignity as citizens of the country. If you cannot reach the masses by your vernaculars, you will never reach them at all by any other method. So, I would urge on you young men to cultivate the vernacular and not to look on it as a burden.

—16 April 1918, *New India*

## **THE CORNER-STONE OF THE NEW WORLD ORDER**

*How is . . . inequality to be reduced in our new social order?*  
Clearly by education, by giving an education which will draw out everything which is in the child, not allowing it to be withheld because of poverty. . . .

What you are giving them in schools to a great extent today is not education, not a drawing-out of faculties in the child already, but a forcing into his memory of large numbers of facts which you take out of him again in the examination room. *That* is not education ; it is cramming and not very successful cramming either.

### ***Individual Education***

What you want first of all to do . . . is to study the child and find out what qualities he has, what capacities he has, and what powers he has, and you can only do that by giving him a very large amount of freedom, by not forcing him into a groove with children who you think are like him, whereas they are most unlike. Hence you want individual education . . .

### ***The Essence of Good Teaching***

Instead of having teachers who will have a certain number of children around them whom they teach and of whom they ask questions for the children to answer, you will have the children asking the teacher questions : not what the teacher wants them to know, but what the children want to know themselves. That is the essence of good teaching . . . continually placing before the child all the things he

wants to know and wants to learn, so that education may develop the faculties he has, instead of trying to force upon him the faculties he has not. If that were done the schools would become a place of joy and happiness ; as it is we transfer them into forcing places. . . .

One great rule of our social order should be : Every child who is born into a civilized nation will be certain of the circumstances which bring out of him to the full every faculty which he has brought with him into the world. That is the corner-stone on which I would found the new Society . . . Education should be free, paid for out of the taxes.

—August 1928, *The Theosophist*

## MASS EDUCATION

First you have to decide what you are going to teach, and then how you are going to get the means to teach it. . . .

### *What to Teach*

Elementary education ought to be the same for every child, and by elementary, I mean that knowledge which is necessary for the whole life of the future. Reading, writing, arithmetic and so on, these ought to be learnt by all alike. But . . . I submit that every boy and girl who goes to an elementary school should learn some of the common things of life, which will later inevitably come into the everyday life, whether it be of the shopkeeper, of the merchant, or of the professional man. Children ought all of them to learn those simple things which are carefully left out of our education : how to bind up a cut ; how to bind up a sprain ; what to do if a burn happens in the household ; what to do in more serious cases

until a doctor can be called in. . . . Every child should learn the common lessons of everyday life. A large number of your men and women would not be able to tell me how you should put on a bandage if there were a bad bleeding—which was threatening the life of a person before a doctor could be brought—in order to save that life. You would not, most of you, know where to put on the bandage, above or below the wound. The man's life may depend upon it, and it is a common and a simple thing. . . . I was able to save the life of a woman in the London streets by the simple fact that I knew how to put on the kind of bandage which would stop the flow of blood. . . . If there is a common burn, people run about and wonder what they shall do, because of the absence of such kind of education, and this ought to be a part of the teaching in every elementary school.

### *How to Teach*

Some say children are hard to teach. It is because you do not know how to teach them. Every child is always asking questions, which means that he wants to know something about the queer world in which he suddenly finds himself; but when the children ask questions, you say: "Don't bother." When the child says "Why?" you say: "Oh, be quiet," and so you make the child afraid and stop his longing to learn. Teach the child what it wants to know, and not what you want to teach it, and you will very soon find your elementary schools crowded by eager children anxious to learn. . . .

### ***Medical Examination***

Wherever there is a school, there should be a medical man to look to the examination of the children in the first instance ; not the kind of doctor who cures disease when it is there, but one who prevents little defects from growing into permanent and large defects. . . .

### ***The Financing of Mass Education***

How to found these elementary schools. . . . That is your big problem, and I can only suggest one or two ways. First, the cooperative movement is spreading. Wherever there is a cooperative society in a village, a village school should form part of that cooperative society. . . . Wherever you have a cooperative panchayat, add one or two men more for the educational department of it. That you can do without the help of any Government, You can do it in areas of such small size that the cost of it will not be crushing to any particular community.

*Restore the Panchayats :* Then the next step is to appoint village panchayats everywhere, whether the co-operative movement is there or not. Now, in this, Government is willing to help you. The panchayat saves litigation and heavy expenditure. It saves the Collector rushing about from one place to another, and deciding twenty or thirty suits perhaps in as many minutes for lack of time. It makes over the disputes of the villagers into the hands of people who know the men, who know the rights and the wrongs of the case, as no visitor can possibly know them, however clever he may be ; and I believe that by the establishment of the village panchayat system of rule in India, which will from the



village unit grow upwards in graded ranks, as also by the establishment of the cooperative societies, you will be able to solve piecemeal the problem of mass education, which is too huge, as I said, for any Government to deal with effectively. . . . Your villagers have the genius for Self-Government. They have shown it for thousands of years. But they have not now the initiative to begin it. . . . So I would ask the more self-sacrificing of the town-dwellers, those who are able to give some time to it, to put their hands to this plough of national education, to found cooperative societies, . . . to establish panchayats everywhere. . . . Then your cultivated villagers will form the strength of your nation, and will pay you back in intelligent patriotism that which you spend upon them today in effort and in labour. . . . In your mass education, take village by village, and solve the question slowly, beginning in small manageable areas, building up from the village schools to the University.

Summing up : . . . in your literary education you want to bring the Indian side out, and use the Western to supplement, except perhaps in matters of science, where the line of teaching in the West is more effective than the line of teaching here. But do not forget that you also have science, and do not let the West entirely drive you out of it. You have an indigenous medicine. You have a knowledge of many scientific facts, you have a psychology greater than the western, and you should not let these go while you are acquiring scientific knowledge from the West. Make the subjects that relate to India first in education, and to other nations second. Then, in the technical education which you give, take the other side of providing a field of employment

for the trained young men you turn out, otherwise they become bitter and discontented and add to the difficulties of the country.

—Lecture delivered 17 April 1914, *The Birth of New India*

## **THE EDUCATION OF THE DEPRESSED CLASSES**

“Children ought to grow like flowers in the sunshine and not like weeds in the cellar.

—21 January 1918, *New India*

In every nation we find as the basis of the social pyramid, a large class of people, ignorant, degraded, unclean in language and habits, people who perform many tasks which are necessary for society, but who are despised and neglected by the very society to whose needs they minister. . . . In India this class forms one-sixth of the total population and goes by the generic name of the “depressed classes.” It springs from the aboriginal inhabitants of the country, conquered and enslaved by the Aryan invaders, but has a civilization behind it. . . . The scavengers, sweepers, husbandmen, and the followers of other simple crafts who make up the huge bulk of the depressed . . . are gentle, docile, as a rule industrious, pathetically submissive, merry enough when not in actual want, with a bright though generally very limited intelligence; of truth and the civic virtues they are for the most part utterly devoid—how should they be anything else?—but they are affectionate, grateful for the slightest kindness, and with much “natural religion.” In fact they offer good material for simple and useful, though

humble civic life, very much better material than is found in the lowest strata of western lands. . . .

### ***Shall They Attend the General Schools ?***

Here, as everywhere, education is the lever by which we may hope to raise them, but a difficulty arises at the outset, for one class of the community moved by a noble feeling of compassion and benevolence, but not adding thereto a careful and detailed consideration of the conditions, demands for the children of the pariah community admission to the schools frequented by the sons of the higher classes, and charges with lack of brotherhood those who are not in favour of this policy. It becomes, therefore, necessary to ask whether brotherhood is to mean levelling down, and whether it is usual in a family to treat the elder children and the babies in exactly the same way. It is a zeal not according to knowledge—and not according to nature—which would substitute equality for brotherhood, and demand from the cultured and refined that they should forfeit the hardly won fruits of the education of generations, in order to create an artificial equality, as disastrous to the progress of the future as it would be useless for the improvement of the present.

The children of the depressed classes need, first of all, to be taught cleanliness, outside decency of behaviour, and the earliest rudiments of education, religion, and morality. Their bodies, at present, are ill-odorous and foul, with the liquor and strong smelling foods out of which for generations they have been built up ; it will need some generations of purer food and living to make their bodies fit to sit in the close

neighbourhood of a schoolroom with children who have received bodies from an ancestry trained in habits of exquisite personal cleanliness, and fed on pure foodstuffs. We have to raise the depressed classes to a similar level of physical purity, not to drag down the clean to the level of the dirty, and until this is done, close association is undesirable. We are not blaming these children, nor their parents, for being what they are ; we are stating a mere palpable fact. The first daily lesson in a school for these children should be a bath, and the putting on of a clean cloth, and the second should be a meal of clean wholesome food ; those primary needs cannot be supplied in a school intended for children who take their daily bath in the early morning, and who come to school well fed.

Another difficulty that faces teachers of these children is the contagious diseases that are bred from dirt ; to take one example, eye-disease, wholly due to neglect, is one of the most common and " catching " complaints among them. In our Panchama schools in Madras the teachers are ever on the alert to detect and check this, and the children's eyes are daily washed and the disease is thus prevented. But is it to be expected that fathers and mothers, whose daily care protects their children from such dirty diseases, should deliberately expose them at school to this infection ?

Nor are the manners and habits of these forlorn little ones desirable things to be imitated by gently-nurtured children. Good manners, for instance, are the result of continual and rigid self-control, and of consideration for the comfort and convenience of others ; children learn manners chiefly by

imitation from well-bred parents and teachers, and secondarily by suitable precept and reproof. If, at the school, they are to be made to associate with children not thus trained, they will quickly fall into the ways which they see around them. For until good habits are rendered fixed by long practice, it is far easier to be slipshod than accurate, to be careless than careful. Ought the children of families in which good manners and courtesy are hereditary, to be robbed of their heritage, a robbery that enriches no one, but drags the whole nation down? Gentle speech, well-modulated voice, pleasant ways, these are the valuable results of long culture, and to let them be swamped out is no true brotherhood. Rather should we try to share them with our younger brothers by training them as we have ourselves been trained. . . .

A man in England who proposed that ragged school children should be admitted to Eton and Harrow would not be argued with, but laughed at. Here, when a similar proposition is made in the name of brotherhood, people seem ashamed to point out frankly its absurdity, and they do not realize that the proposal is merely a violent reaction against the cruel wrongs which have been inflicted on the depressed classes, the outcry of an awakened conscience, which has not yet had time to call right reason to guide its emotions. . . . It is scarcely likely that I urge this on my Indian brethren from indifference to the suffering: for thirty-four years I have worked for those who suffer; but, perhaps, because I have so long been in close touch with them, I know that they are not at present fit to come into association with children of happier surroundings. . . .

Hence the duty and responsibility which lie upon us of improving both the surroundings and the characters of the depressed classes by every means in our power, shortening the period of their lives in this stage, and utilizing our knowledge in their favour. By teaching their children the elements of right living, we draw out and cultivate the germinal powers of the soul ; and by checking and repressing the faults which are manifest, by improving their food and their environment, we help to build better bodies suitable for the more unfolded souls. This is the help we both can give and ought to give to these our successors on the stage of the world, and small will be our claim to the help of the Greater Ones, if we refuse our help to these little ones of the human race. How shall we dare to plead to the Lords of Compassion to stoop to us and help us to rise, unless we, in our turn, stoop to those below us, and seek to raise them up.

—1909, *The Birth of New India*

## NIGHT SCHOOLS

There is no duty more pressing and more incumbent on all men and women who love their country than an attempt to spread education among those whose circumstances in life make it difficult for them to obtain it without much help from outside. . . . The fact that certain classes of the population who are most in need of help . . . send to the schools people of different ages makes their work the more difficult, and demands more exertion from those who guide it. If a young lad comes to a night school who is also employed in the day it is clear that his longing for knowledge is of the very strongest kind and that some scheme should as far as

possible be adopted which will make the gaining of that knowledge easy to him, which will make it attractive and easily assimilated. . . . In England, they are proposing that even where the child is employed in some form of livelihood he shall still be kept under some educational control up to the age of eighteen. Such a proposal shows a very great advance. . . .

In the case of the younger children that come to these schools, dealing as you are with children earning a livelihood, you have to consider whether you cannot make your education helpful to them in the vocation which they have taken up. The great fault to a large extent of the education of the children, especially of the poor, has been that instead of making it vocational, it has been entirely apart from the ordinary life, and the result is that the brain is not trained in a fashion which will enable it to apply the training intelligently to life. The effect of the education upon the poor is to drive them to the most underpaid and overworked class of the community of the semi-educated clerk. It is not that class that you want to increase. You want to give to the boys and girls a means of earning their bread which will increase the wealth of the country as well as the wealth of the individual and enable them to earn a livelihood which will put them beyond a continual struggle for bread.

From the beginning, you must train the hands of the children, the senses of the children, as well as the intelligence of the children. The lessons given in a night schools should be short and varied. The attention of a child, especially of a child that has been working during the day is difficult to hold. When you are dealing with young children, you will

find that the very moment the attention begins to wander it is well to change the subject of the teaching. With regard to the older pupils who come to these night schools and who belong to the labouring classes, you will find that they are very little interested in learning how to read and write. They are not only interested in information that bears upon their ordinary work and life, but in village schools you find that they are eager to learn by taking part in repetition of what is read, rather than learning in modern fashion. Enormous good would be done by having talks with such pupils on subjects such as sanitation, hygiene, conditions of the body, and things which interest them in everyday life.

One of the most promising things is the inclination for Cooperative Societies to grow up among the pupils in the night schools. There is no quicker way to help people crushed by debts borrowed at exorbitant interest than to start such societies and help them to pay off their debts at easy rates of interest.

There is one thing that is universally true : the measure of service that you can give to your fellow men is the measure of happiness in your own life. Instead of seeking happiness for yourself, if you seek to spread happiness among those less fortunate than yourself, you will wake up to find that your life is full of happiness and that it flows back to you. The deepest thing in us is the unity which grows out of the One Life in which we are all rooted. We cannot bring out that life and expand it, as happiness expands life, without sharing the expansion that we have made possible for the life of another. Sacrifice, to the life within us, is a joy and not a sorrow. It may be sacrifice looked at from the standpoint



of the body, but it is joy looked at from the standpoint of the spirit that gives, and the life in you lives by sacrifice. The life of your body lives by taking—it is the essence of matter and it grows by what it takes and assimilates. But the life of the spirit is just the reverse of it; it grows by giving and not by taking, by spreading to others and not by accumulating in itself, and it is a splendid truth as regards all that is non-physical that it increases as you give and does not diminish. If I am imparting knowledge and if I am sharing happiness and striving to give life and share it with others, as I give away it increases in myself, and the more I give, the more I have to give. As you grow older and older you will find the truth told in so many scriptures and proved to be true in so many experiences that such work as is being done to help the poor, the attempts that are made to instruct the ignorant, to feed the hungry, to spread happiness among the miserable, will come back to the givers in ever-increasing measure and they will find a joy than which no joy on earth is greater, that in the realization of Brotherhood they have found that unity of the Self which it is the effort of all to realize and live in, knowing that in that alone is bliss, in that alone is rest.

—30 April 1918, *New India*

## **TO WHAT END—EDUCATION ?**

Why should I speak to you about education, and urge you to make it a matter for the Nation, and not only a matter for the Government ? I speak to you on this, because there is one thing that we all are hoping and working for, that great building up of India into one mighty Nation, United :

India. It is towards that that all our efforts should be turning, and we must build up young men and women of character, of courage, of patriotism, and of self-sacrifice, because only out of these elements can a nationality be built. People sometimes say. . . that India is only "a geographical expression." . . . The prophet creates the ideal, and the thinker places it before the mass of the people ; with the fire of his genius he lights the flame of patriotism, which from the altar of his heart is to spread to the hearts of the people. Now the prophecy of the dreamers that India shall yet be a mighty nation is proving true today ; forces are at work which are drawing together the people from the Himalayas to Tuticorin, from Assam in the East to Kathiawar in the West ; the India of the future lives in our hearts and hopes today, and she will come down into actuality when her children are worthy of her. . . . In the genius of the Indian people it is the woman, it is the mother, who is raised above all others, and the love for the mother is the deepest in the heart of every man. And so he calls India the Motherland, and not the Fatherland. And when the Indian home is ready, then the Mother shall come to her place ; built as she is now as an ideal, she shall become a reality. . . . That is the India that is coming, that is the India that is building, and you are the builders who are training the young for her service.

They shall reap what you are sowing ; they shall build in actuality what you are building in hope and in ideal. You remember what Mr. Gokhale said, words so noble that they can never weary us in their repetition : " It will be for others in the future to serve India by their successes ; we must be content to serve her by our failures." I know of no nobler

words spoken by nobler patriot, for greater are they who in the dark believe in the dawning, than they who stand in the glory of the sunlight ; those who know in the depths of their strong hearts that the dawn shall come and the shadows disappear. Sometimes I look forward to the happier days of tomorrow, when all roads shall be open, when all ways shall be clear, when a vast Empire shall look round on her children filled with patriotism ; then men and women in other lands will look back to the days in which we are, and they will say : “ We thank them that in the days of fear they still were brave ; that in the days of ignorance they still looked forward to the hope ; that in the darkness they never forgot the coming light.” For it is a grander thing to serve while others stand back, than to take part in the progress of a mighty nation, when all the Empire welcomes the children born of her womb.

—17 April 1914, *The Birth of New India*

# CITIZENSHIP

## CREATING INDIA'S LEADERS

### *To the Youth of India*

It is but repeating truisms to say that the Destiny of a Nation is folded within its youth, as is the flower within the close embrace of the sepals that sheathe the bud. That that which you are thinking today, the Nation will think to-morrow. That your characters, bold or timid, noble or base, generous or sordid, chivalrous or mean, pure or unclean, will show out in the characters of the Nation's citizens, a few years hence. That you are creating those characters now, shaping them out of the materials you brought with you to your present bodies; for what a man thinks upon, that he becomes. Your thoughts in past lives created the character you brought with you into the world; your thoughts in the past of this life have moulded it year by year into its present form; your present thoughts are creating the character of your manhood, shaping the citizens who shall be India, when we, the elders, shall have passed away. India gave you birth, she is your Mother; yet you shall recreate her as your daughter, in the years to come. In the great chain of life, in which each generation is a golden link, every link is

supported by those that are before it, every link supports those that are after it. These are, indeed, but truisms, but they are truisms that live, and should guide and inspire. . . .

Young India, then, means the youth of the Nation, rising above all divisions, forgetting all ancient animosities, with its watchword, *United India*, with its banner on which is inscribed: *Worship the Motherland, Vande Mâtaram*. . . .

### ***First Rigorous Training***

To send men to fight without training, without discipline, without knowledge, would be sending them as sheep to the slaughterhouse. And, gentlemen, in the service of the Motherland, in the service of the Goddess Liberty, do you suppose that you can enlist and go straight into the noblest and holiest of struggles, the struggles which create National Self-Rule, which set free a Nation, without serving as National Recruits, without undergoing the preparatory discipline which alone makes citizenship possible, the training which develops the youth into the man, the man into the citizen of a free country? Do you feel in the flush of the hot enthusiasm which leads you to enlist in the Service of the Motherland, that you want to act—to act at once? So feels the recruit. But he has to pass through the hard training which alone can make a soldier, worthy to wear the uniform of his country. Does it chill your enthusiasm when you are told that National Service begins with rigorous training? If so, your enthusiasm is only like a fire of twigs that blazes up furiously with much crackling and then dies down. The only enthusiasm worthy of a Patriot is that which remains white-hot under difficulties, under

drudgery, under discipline. Do not venture to profane the Altar of the Motherland with a fire that dies down under the breath of disciplined training. The only enthusiasm useful in the cause of Liberty, is like the tempered steel; it has been purified in the furnace of discipline, hammered on the anvil of knowledge, poured red hot into the ice-cold water of drudgery, until it has a strength that naught can break, a resilience that naught can overstrain, a keenness that naught can resist, a flexibility that naught can escape. Only when your characters are like tempered steel will you be worthy to go on active service. . . .

### *To Become Soldiers of Freedom*

You, the students of today, boys in school, young men in college, are to go out into a New India, an India that is rising out of Other-Rule into Self-Rule, like Lakshmi out of the ocean churned by the Suras and Asuras. That New India will be shaped, guided, developed by you, and by thousands like you, all over the land. Among the students in schools and colleges today, among you, are the future statesmen, the future leaders, the future generals, the future admirals, the future merchant princes, the future scientists, the future rulers of India. Nay among you are also the future members of the Imperial Council, the Council which shall control the destinies of a mighty Empire, which is to be a blessing or a curse to the whole world—a blessing if guided by noble, unselfish, pious, righteous statesmen, a curse if guided by the base, the selfish, the materialistic, and the bad. . . .

Now that things are changing, you must change with them, and you must bear in your youth the training of the free. For in the maturity of your manhood, you will be responsible for India's peace, India's order, India's progress ; with the glory, you must take also the responsibility of Freedom. And Freedom is a Goddess beautiful but austere ; she is the armed Warrior, strong and unstained. The Heroes who follow her are mighty men, not weaklings, and she needs for her service men, and not drones.

Without preparation some of you would rush into action, raw recruits into the firing-line, more dangerous to their own army than to the army of the foe. Many of you do not realize how serious a thing is political action, how far-reaching are political movements, how interdependent the parts of the complex body of a Nation, how rashness means ruin, and folly spells catastrophe, and blunders slip insensibly into crimes. In politics men play with human lives, with the prosperity of Nations, with the plenty or starvation of Peoples, with the safety or destruction of homes, with the happiness or misery of millions of men, women, and children. If Temples of stone are held to be holy, are guarded from the foot of the profane, shall any unclean and unfit enter the Temple that is built of human lives, that is consecrate to the service of Humanity ? Would you enter it in manhood, you who are students ?

### *The Sowing of the Seed*

You are constituted of four important elements ; your body, the instrument of your actions ; your emotions, the root of your happiness or sorrow, your virtues and vices ;

your mind, the builder of your character and the director of activity ; your Self, the Spirit, the Inner Ruler Immortal, the broken rays of whose perfection are what we call down here the Good, the Beautiful, and the True.

The body, the emotions, the mind, form the Field, which you, the Spirit, must till and cultivate, where the seeds of a noble harvest must be sown. . . .

Now you must train your body for the sake of the Motherland ; it is hers, and she has need of strong, vigorous, enduring bodies, hard in muscle and steady in nerve. Soft, flabby, fat, lazy bodies are not bodies for freemen ; they are only fit for slaves. And remember that youth is the only time for making a strong and vigorous body. . . .

The emotions of youths are strong and apt to carry them away. Yet if you would serve the Motherland in the future, you must learn self-control, you must encourage right emotion, and starve out wrong by turning away from it. You need to cultivate courage and endurance, kindness and helpfulness, truth and generosity. You must show reverence to all that is worthy of it : to God, to your parents, to your teachers. You must protect the weak, show tenderness to the aged, be courteous to the poor, to all below you in rank. Never speak a rough word to one whose position renders impossible a rough retort, and never cringe to a superior. Never lie, either from fear or greed, nor play the hypocrite to please. . . Play well the great game of life. . .

If you would serve the Motherland well, you must study hard and deeply. Remember that education does not mean storing the memory with facts ; it means drawing out the faculties of the mind, and bringing them under control, so



that you can address them to any question, and deal efficiently and adequately with the problems of life as they present themselves. You need to cultivate observation, accuracy, discrimination, the power of classification, the seeing of things in true proportion—that is, the perception of values, and of the relation of one object to another. Thinking is the establishment of relations. You must cultivate attention, both alert and sustained, for concentration is only formal and developed attention, and without concentration no mastery of great questions is possible. . . . But whatever you study, remember to do it for the Mother's sake, and that dedication of all to Her, of all as the preparation for Her Service, shall make all drudgery fascinating, and gild the dullest study with the promise of future use. Body, emotions, mind, all are consecrate to Her, are held in trust for Her Service.

### *The One Self*

What shall I say of this, your very Self? The religions of the world have all one aim,—the Realization of the Self, the Knowledge of God. Their outward rites and ceremonies are intended for the training of the body, to overcome its sloth, to teach temperance in all things, to make it a useful servant, not a tyrannical master. Their moral precepts are directed to the training of the emotions to the loftiest end. Their metaphysics and philosophies aim at the highest development of the intellect. But the essence of Religion is Unity, the Realization of the One God, within and without, flowering into the Brotherhood of all that lives.

In India, all the great religions find a home, and some say that religious differences must ever prevent the growth of a true Nationality. Ill do they think, who thus assert. The details of religions vary, and the unspiritual fight over non-essentials. But the heart of Religion is one—the Love of God and Man. . . Let a common pride replace religious jealousies all over India.

### *The Recruit Manoeuvres*

I have spoken much of the training which should fill the student's days ; but what of his touch with the outer world ? Our recruit learns to dig trenches, to march, to manoeuvre, to fire. How else should he become ready for the battle-field ? And so with you. You should take interest in the political questions of the day, read them in the papers, debate on them in your debating societies ; if possible, as in the Central Hindu College, make a Parliament, where you can learn the forms of Legislative Assemblies, learn to argue cogently, to bear opposition with good temper, to be sound in your logic, accurate in your facts, clear in your exposition. Or have a Union, like those of Oxford and Cambridge, where Gladstone and others won their first laurels. Your opinions will often be crude, one-sided, exaggerated ; how can they be aught else in the beginning ? Better to have them crude now, than when you go out into public life, when the crudity will affect the lives of others. These discussions will force you to study, if you are not to make yourselves ridiculous. If you have fluency, a facile tongue, take care that your knowledge outruns your speech. not your speech your knowledge, and do not let your fluency

tempt you to hide ignorance with words. Oratory should cover a plenum, not a vacuum, and for its support it needs constant study ; it must be uplifted by the pillars of Wisdom and Strength ; not by Beauty alone. And let your debates deal with questions of details, the formation and work of Panchayats and Local Boards ; with sanitation and hygiene, urban and rural ; with the establishment of village schools, with curricula, elementary, secondary, technical ; with the uplift of the submerged classes ; the questions of mendicancy, charity, cooperation, and the like. You will need all this when your college work is over.

This study, this debate, are the manoeuvres of the recruit, his last preparation ere he goes to the front.

### *The Recruit Serves*

But to make knowledge fruitful, it must be lived, not only studied. Organize yourselves for Social Service. Let a group of you take up a night-school, and in rotation be responsible for its supervision, say each for one evening in the week ; subscribe for a regular teacher, but share and supervise his work. Let another group visit a hospital, collect books and papers and take them to the patients, sit with the convalescent, and if they need it, look after them a little when they come out. Let another group take charge of a reading-room, again in rotation, one evening a week. Let another group organize a little Loan Society for the very poor, and relieve them from increasing debts. But in all such things remember that you must carry them on upon sound business principles, and be rigid in your accuracy. In this, especially, it would be well to have the help and

guidance of a good man of business, lest you should do more harm than good. Where there is a branch of the Servants of India Society, you could always have such affectionate guidance, alike in your study and in your practical work. Let another group work for the helping of poor students ; collect school-books that are done with and supply poor boys with them ; arrange meals for them in one place, instead of letting them wander from one house to another for their food. Help in your town, if there are melas, taking care of the aged, of women and children especially. There are endless ways of helping, if only the spirit of service is in you. In these works among the poor and suffering you will learn their needs, understand their troubles, and gain a fund of practical knowledge that you can utilize when you go out into the world.

You see there is work, more work than enough to fully occupy your leisure in these days of preparation. Then when you go out into the world, you will be ready for the more responsible work, fit to play your part as men, not raw recruits but trained soldiers in Liberty's Army.

Rarely in the long history of the world has youth opening before it a manhood so full of noblest possibilities of achievement. May Ishvara help you to be worthy of it. May the Motherland have cause to be proud of you. Take as the motto for the coming years :

*Be God-loving and Man-serving ;  
Be Pure, be Brave, be Strong."*

—9 October 1915, *The Future of Young India*

Who makes a movement, leader or followers ? History answers : " Both." An unorganized mass of people is a mob,

potent only to destroy. Knowledge and discipline transform the mob into an effective instrument for defence and construction. A great individuality is impotent unless it can attract around it the force of numbers. A Cromwell, a Napoleon, only conquered because they aroused in others a passionate devotion, and were heroes worshipped by their soldiers, who were ready to follow them to death.

Moreover, the followers must be full of noble ideas if the movement is to be strong. . . . Without ideals no great forward movement has ever been successful, and the prophet must formulate that which inspires the leaders and impels the followers.

—September 1913, *The Young Citizen*

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## TO A YOUNG PRINCE: THE IDEAL OF KINGSHIP

Does it seem strange in these democratic days to hold up the Ideal of Kingship? But human beings are much the same, whatever be their label, and one of the deepest longings of the human heart is to find and follow a true leader.

We "needs must love the highest when we see it," and the strongest Democrat is loyal to his Leader, if the Leader be worthy of loyalty. The pity is the Leader and the Ruler are not now always found in one and the same person, and the "Hero as King" is not always one with the wearer of the royal robe; it is likely that one outcome of the present anarchy in western Nations will be to prove that ignorance

cannot rule, whether embodied in a mob or in an autocrat, that folly, whether in purple or in fustian, spells ruin. Democracy will probably work out some way of finding a Nation's best, and placing them in the seats of power ; for superior wisdom and character are the only true credentials of authority. Eugenics justifies the value of breed, of race purity, of physical type. But the essentials of breed have been disregarded in princely and noble houses, and descent loses value where the factors which should mark it have long been disregarded. Birth and *Dharma* together preserve the purity of descent, and where the second has been neglected the value of the first disappears. Princely by birth, see to it, that your character is princely, and that the inner life corresponds to the outer label.

—18 February 1932, *New India*, From  
“ Advice to a Prince ”

## SCOUTING

[A MESSAGE DATED 7 MARCH 1929]

If I had a dozen sons—I have only one—I would send them all into the Scout Movement, as soon as they could enter its lowest grade. And I would send the daughters into the Girl Guides, under similar conditions, to begin at the beginning. Now do you think that I could say anything stronger than that, as a recommendation to you, who read this, in the way of advice as to joining the Scouts or the Guides, according as you are a boy or a girl ?

If you are wondering why I write so strongly, I will tell you why I do. It is because I have seen Cubs, and Scouts, and

Rovers, and I know what a useful lot they are, as boys and as men. And so also with the girls.

They are good citizens of their country, ready to work for it ; ready to live for it ; ready to die for it. That is the idea conveyed by the word " citizen." It means a man who is fit to live in a city ; in other words—a man who is fit to live in Society, fit to live among a group of other people.

We put this in another way in our Scout pledge. We promise to " do a good turn every day." As you know, a good turn is some helpful act, for which you are not paid in any way, except by love which cannot be bought or sold. And you promise on your Honour. Honour leads you to do good things without being made to do them. It is the Voice of God within you, bidding you to do some good act which you are not ordered to do by someone who has the right to give an order to you.

You see why you should do a thing that you feel, inside you, that you ought to do. That inner feeling is God's Voice speaking inside you ; and if you do it, you will become a good and noble man, and help your Nation to hold up her head among the Nations of the world.

And so Good be with you, Brothers, for I, though in a woman's body, am your Brother Scout.

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Perhaps you may like to know that I took the Scout's pledge from our Chief Scout, Sir Robert Baden-Powell, here in Madras, at a big Scout Rally.

[Dr. Besant also received from his hands later the Silver Wolf, one of the highest honours conferred by the Chief Scout upon those who had rendered great service to the Scout Movement.]

## **FIND YOUR HERO**

To Serve is the crown of human life. The fortunate ones, eager to serve, find one to whom they can render service, and joyfully enrol themselves as helpers. To each Young Citizen I would say : Look around you for some one who is greater than yourself, who, to some extent, embodies that which you fain would be. Hero-worship is uplifting and inspiring, it purifies the heart, ennobles the character, and stimulates the energy. Serve your Hero in every way you can, and pay him that truest flattery which is imitation. Joyfully will he help you to find one greater than himself, and, for your practice with him, will increase your capacity for service. Work well done with the lower is the passport to higher Service, and each rising presages the one beyond. Happy are they who have found their Master and their work. Happy are they also who are still seeking, for they who seek shall find.

—March 1913, *The Young Citizen*

## **A YOUNG MAN'S DUTY TO HIS COUNTRY**

I cannot hope to sum up better your duty than with the thought of the vow taken by the youth of Athens :

“ We will never bring disgrace to this our city by any act of dishonesty or cowardice, nor ever desert our suffering comrades in the ranks. We will fight for the ideals and the sacred things of the city, both alone and with many. We will revere and obey the city's laws and do our best to invite a like respect and reverence in those



above us who are prone to annul or set them at naught. We will strive unceasingly to quicken the public sense of civic duty. We will transmit the city not only not less, but greater, better, and more beautiful than it was when transmitted to us."

*[Dr. Besant made of the New India Office practically a recruiting bureau for the Defence of India Force, appealing to those over 18 years of age to take advantage of the special opportunity to defend their Motherland.]*

That opportunity must not pass ungrasped, unseized. We have been talking for years and years about the right of Indians to defend their country, about their right to carry arms, about their claim to be drilled and trained, so as to be able to guard their own land and the Empire. Now, the Defence of India Force is meant for the defence of this country, and it would be a scandal and shame if, when the opportunity is given, those who had talked so loudly should shrink back from putting their words into action. That is the reason why I make, and shall continue to make an appeal. I know that it means throwing back for a time the Home Rule propaganda, and the loss of our best workers in the political field, but that does not count in a moment like this. . . . India cannot hold back without shaming herself in the face of the world. Inasmuch as the younger men are ever the most enthusiastic, the most ready to sacrifice, I urge that all of you who can do it, and whose parents consent—and most of them I know will—should come forward and be trained, learn military discipline, learn to use the rifle and the gun, and remember that you will be able hereafter as men to serve your country as you never could do, if you were a

disarmed and helpless mob. . . . You are not asked to go outside the country, but you are asked to be ready to defend your own country, and to set free the trained soldiers who will be ready to go to the front. Do not let such an opportunity be missed. . . .

—13 February 1917, *New India*

## **A VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS**

It is very desirable that Home Rulers everywhere in India should take counsel on the question of the Defence of the Motherland, and of their duty in connection therewith. Disarmed as Indians have been for 40 years, and unreasonable as it is under such conditions to ask them suddenly to become the bulwark of the Empire in Asia, they must yet prepare themselves for the natural duty of men, to protect their own country from invasion and to preserve internal order.

From time immemorial there have existed in the hills and jungles of India, wild tribes who have lived mainly by hunting and foraging. They did no particular harm when the population was armed, save when they profited by any local invasion, or foray, and they joyfully took part in any looting that might be going on. Raids on villages they sometimes made, but they were not a source of more than temporary annoyance. They still descend and plunder from time to time, knowing that the villagers are now defenceless, save for the sticks which they ply lustily on occasion, but which are a poor defence against firearms.

The Government in some parts of the country is now calling on the police to volunteer for the Army, and the

response is very largely made. As this process continues, the police force will become more and more depleted, until at last it is no longer competent to preserve internal order. Towns will be largely at the mercy of the criminal classes, and rural districts at the mercy of dacoits.

Ought we to remain quiescent, looking on indifferently, and making no preparations for the preservation of our homes from attack? Surely it would be more reasonable to enrol ourselves as Volunteers for the preservation of civic order, and to organize a band in every ward or other division of our cities, who should be ready to act at once, if occasion should arise. We cannot wait until, as at Mussoorie, the whole European police force and all but three of the Indian force have volunteered for the front. We can drill and learn to obey promptly, and though we cannot have arms, a policeman's truncheon is enough to disperse an ordinary mob, where men act together, and obey the word of command. Each man in the force should know his central station, and the area with which he would be concerned if called on. He should learn the signal which summons him to his centre, and know the quickest way to reach it. Bands of young men should be trained in patrol duty, as indeed some are already training themselves in neighbourhoods where tendencies towards looting have appeared, and the formation of such bands is urgently necessary in rural districts.

These citizen police forces would form nuclei for the Citizen Army, which will be evolved by the pressure of circumstances, however unwilling the Government may be to initiate, or even approve of, such a step. Moreover,

more definite steps may be taken in this direction, and will, we hope, be taken by the Home Rule Council.

In Bombay, the Home Rule League has a well-drilled Volunteer Corps ; they wear uniform, and, consisting as the corps does, of stalwart young men, they present a very smart and soldier-like appearance. The Corps was organized to help in the general work of the Branch, and to serve it in all ways required.

This Corps could easily be sufficiently enlarged to provide bodies of well-drilled men for the preservation of internal order, should need arise. And it might also form a very strong nucleus for a division of the Citizen Army. Such Corps of Volunteers should be formed everywhere.

Volunteering is the only way. Men must earn their livelihood and give their spare time to drilling and training. We have no funds for paid soldiers ; we must follow the British Territorial plan. Now is the hour for sacrifice to the Motherland. Let those who love Her respond.

—29 June 1918, *New India*

## ***THE TRUE PATRIOT,***

“ To Indian Youth : I shall give up the Home Rule Movement if you do not come forward to defend your home. If you want Home Rule, be prepared to defend your home. Had it not been for my age, I would have been the first to volunteer. You cannot reasonably say that the ruling will be done by you, and the fighting for you by Europeans or Japanese in the matter of home defence. . . ”

Those words [said Dr. Besant in addressing a recruiting meeting] came from Mr. Tilak the very day after he had

received the order of Sir Michael O'Dwyer forbidding him to enter the Panjab. I mention that, because it shows the spirit in which all patriots should act. We have many grievances against our local Governments, but this is the time not to dwell upon them, but to forget them. When there is a call to the defence of the Motherland, all grievances must be thrown aside, and it is the test of Indian patriotism how many will come forward to enrol. . . Over and over again it has been said that those who desire to rule their country must be prepared to defend their country, and that is true. It is idle to claim to play a citizen's part in the ruling, unless you are willing to play a citizen's part in the defending. . . Nor, if you can afford it, should the question of pay come into your minds. It is the honour of serving the Motherland, the honour of being one of the defenders of the country, making yourselves ready for the time when other Nations shall no longer say that India is unable to defend herself.

—22 February 1917, *New India*

While early enthusiasm has been completely killed out by the difficulties put in the way . . . this is no reason why men of the right age should hold back [commented Dr. Besant at a public meeting in Trichinopoly, 27 May 1917 on the recruiting of men for the Home Defence Force]. Enthusiasm that blazes for a moment and then dies down is not the enthusiasm that will make our Nation great. It is like a flame of straw, it is not true patriotism, not the real love of country, and not the devotion to the Motherland. Granting the conditions are unfavourable, it does not matter to young men if they have difficulties. They should think it not

as a call to the Government but as a call of the Motherland. . . .

I will feel very discouraged about the political work unless this recruiting work comes out gloriously. Let no official be allowed to hinder our work. If you do not subscribe to the War Loan it does not matter. Men are better than money and more useful to the Motherland. . . . Men are needed, brave and gallant men out of which stuff the Nation is made. I would ask you to put aside all discouragement and think of the Mother. . . . I have no son, no grandson to give, but I give my life to India, and if persons give all they have, they cannot give anything more. I am risking far more for India than any of you will do who join the Volunteer Force. I am risking—I know—the likelihood of imprisonment and bankruptcy. What do I care, what is life worth except for India's sake? What is suffering worth if it finds India's freedom? Russia's freedom has been made by Russian young men and young women who went to the scaffold and exile in order that they might redeem their Motherland from tyranny. They did not count the price or cost but gave themselves freely at the feet of the Motherland.

Young men, lay your youth, your strong muscles, your brave hearts, [at her feet]—it is not much to give for so short a time, but she will take it. Go to her great altar and vow your lives to her. Give her everything you have to give, she will take it up and bless it, and your poor gift shall be turned into gold and jewel, for the touch of the Motherland makes all sacred. Do not let the world say that India's children are unworthy of their past, that India's sons are today cowards

where once they were heroes. Show as far as you can in this paltry opportunity that you are willing to do all you can, and then the high Gods will give you greater opportunities. They will open for you wider ways and more splendid chances than those given today—the poor three months asked of you in the Indian Defence Force, and then you shall have shown your earnestness and have the right to ask in future years greater gifts for you to give her, and the power that is only rightly used by those who know how to sacrifice and how to pay.

—28 May 1917, *New India*

### ***“ THEREFORE FIGHT, O ARJUNA ! ”***

Courage, fearlessness, splendid generosity, throwing away of life in the defence of the weak and in the discharging of one's duties—that is the Dharma of the Kshattriya. His duty is to protect what is given him in charge against all aggression from without. It may cost him life, but never mind that. He must do his duty. To protect, to guard, that is his work. His strength is to be a barrier between the weak and the oppressive, between the helpless and those who would trample them under foot. Right for him the following of war and the struggle in the jungle with the wild beast. Because you do not understand what evolution is, and what the law of growth, you stand aghast at the horrors of war. But the great Rishis, who made this order, knew that a weak soul can never attain perfection. You cannot get strength without courage, and firmness and courage cannot be got without the facing of danger, and the readiness to throw away life when duty demands the sacrifice.

Our sentimental, weak-kneed, pseudo-moralist shrinks from that teaching. But he forgets that in every nation there are souls that need that training, and whose further evolution depends upon their success in attaining it. I appeal again to Bhishma, the incarnation of Dharma, and I remember what he said, that it is the duty of the Kshattriya to slay thousands of his enemies, if his duty in protection lies in that direction. War is terrible, fighting is shocking, our hearts revolt from it, and we shrink before the anguish of mutilated and mangled bodies. To a great extent this is because we are utterly deluded by form. The one use of the body is to enable the life within it to evolve. But the moment it has learned all that that body can give it, let the body break away, and let the soul go free to take a new body that will enable it to manifest higher powers. . . . Does not the soul require a new body for its higher growth? Let then the body go. This is the hard lesson the Kshattriya learns, and so he throws away his bodily life, and, in this throwing away, his soul gains the power of self-sacrifice, he learns endurance, fortitude, courage, resource, devotion to an ideal, loyalty to a cause, and he pays his body gladly, as the price for these, the immortal soul rising triumphant and preparing for a nobler life.

—1899, *Dharma*

Brethren, You are given a great opportunity which, rightly utilized, may carry you far. Learn through the present turmoil in India to distinguish the Real from the unreal, the underlying Truth from the veil of passing phenomena. The spiritual life is not disturbed by combat, if the combatant be free from hatred and anger, indifferent to success and



failure, peaceful in the midst of strife, calm though surrounded by tumult, fighting for the Right, which is already conqueror in the higher world. Was not the great Scripture of the *Bhagavad-Gita* given "in the midst between two armies"? Was it not given by the yellow-robed Yogi to His disciple, and was He not in a high state of consciousness during the giving, while His strong hand was on the reins of the eager white war-horses, ready to plunge into the fray? Did He not utter as the refrain of His matchless discourse: "Therefore fight, O Arjuna!"? Will any dare to call the Lord of Yoga unspiritual, because He bade His beloved disciple engage in the strife which had been forced upon Him? Therefore stand up, O children of Manu, followers of our great Warrior Master, the Rajput Chief of the Morya clan, resolute to defend our righteous cause. "Taking as equal pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, gird yourselves for the battle; thus shall ye not incur sin." Ours in India is the glorious privilege of standing by . . . our true Leaders, in the day of reproach and imputed dishonour. I congratulate you, I congratulate myself, that we are found worthy to defend Their cause.

—1912, *Presidential Address*

# *VI. India's Magnificent Future*

**ONE OF INDIA'S GREATEST POINTS  
THE WAY**

The sound of Her feet is on the mountains, and soon the  
rising eastern sun shall glow upon Her forehead.

—1909, *The Birth of New India*

## THE INDIA OF TOMORROW

IT is not the right way now to tread only in the footprints of the past, simply to re-introduce what has been. Your duty is to be inspired by the same spirit that made the past great, and in that spirit to shape the form suitable for the India of tomorrow. . . . Trust to life, to the living spirit. We were not there to guide the life, when it made the glorious past. Life can be trusted, for it is divinely guided, and all we have to do is to cooperate with it. . . . Study life's tendencies and work with them, but it is life that builds, not men. . . . If a form does not succeed it will be broken ; and you should be glad in the breaking of the useless form, as you should be glad in the form that means success. Failure often means winning, and it needs dozens, nay hundreds, of attempts before the perfect masterpiece shines out in full. Trust life ; that is the great lesson for these days of change, for change is coming, change from every side. Those changes that are good will endure, and you must be very patient while they are in the making. Be full of hope and full of courage. . . .

There is a new form to be built here, a form to be which has never yet been built, and that is India herself as one nation. As one nation, she exists in the world of mind. As one nation, she has never yet existed on the physical

plane, but the day of her birth is near. Many States and Kings have been, many Maharajas, Rajas, and sometimes one Raja, great beyond his fellows, has held a wide imperial sway. But never yet has there been one India from North to South, from East to West. But she is coming. That one India, when she comes, will have her head crowned with the Himalayas, and her feet will be bathed in the waters that wash the shores of Tuticorin ; she will stretch out her right hand to Burma and Assam, and her left hand to Kathiawar and Baluchistan. That India has to be born. How ? First, by believing in her with a strenuous faith, for faith is a mighty power ; and then by thinking of her and aspiring after her as an ideal. For what a man thinks becomes actual in practice. And never yet was a nation born that did not begin in the spirit, pass to the heart and the mind, and then take an outer form in the world of men. That India, the sound of her feet is on the mountains, and soon the rising eastern sun shall glow upon her forehead. Already she is born in the mind of men.

### ***“ I am an Indian ”***

But let your thought for unity be potent and resolute ; learn to drop sectarian divisions ; learn to drop provincial divisions and animosities ; leave off saying : “ I am a Madrasi ; I am a Punjabi ; I am a Bengali ; I am an upcountry man ” ; leave all that behind and teach your boys and girls to say, “ I am an Indian.” Out of the mouths of the children thus speaking shall be born the India of tomorrow. Many religions will grow within her : not only her own parent religion, but others too will be woven into her being. Hindu and Musalman

must join hands, for both are Indians. Hindus, Musalmans, Parsis, Christians, must join hands, for all are Indians. In the India of the future, all men of every faith must join. If India is to be the spiritual light of the future, in her must be focussed the light that comes from every faith, until in the prism of India they are all united into the one light which shall flood with sunlight the world, and all lights shall blend in the Divine Wisdom. That is our work.

My Brothers, I am now talking to you, but this thing will not be made by talking. It is made by living. I would not dare to speak to you and offer you counsel if I did not strive to live that which I advise. Day by day, week by week, month by month, I strive to shape my life on the noble models which may serve the land, and in serving India will serve Humanity; for greater than any land is Humanity, and greater than any one people is the Race of whom all peoples are but branches; and if we have such hopes of future India, it is because we believe that her coming will be a new light to the world. . . . If India's humiliation has been, in a very real sense, the riches of the world—for this has been the means of spreading India's thoughts in the most widely-spoken tongue of the world; to the North and South, East and West, all round the habitable globe—what shall it be for Humanity when India herself in her new glory is born into the world? India, from whose lips, in this land of the Rishis, came the religion that uplifts and spiritualizes, the philosophy that illumines and the science that trains; India, from whose mind, throughout the world of mind, came those great systems of thought which are now recognized as the noblest products of the human

intellect ; India, whose feet once passed through many States, and made every one of them fertile, prosperous, and wealthy ; India, who was perfect in spirit and mind ; when that India is born into the full vision of the eyes of men, perfect in body, is it too much to say that her coming will be as life from the dead ? That is the glorious goal, for which we work ; that is the splendid hope, that cheers our labour ; that is the sublime aspiration, that rises perpetually to the ears of the Devas. For India's coming means the spiritualizing of humanity ; India's thinking means the lifting of thought on to a higher level ; India's prosperity shall be the justification of religion, the justification of philosophy, as part of the life of a nation ; and the world shall be redeemed from materialism, because India is awake.

—Lecture delivered 1910, in *The Birth of New India*

Aim at progress, my sons. Strive to make India's future worthy of her ancient greatness. Outgrow your fathers in knowledge, outstrip your elders in devotion. For the days of India's greatness are by no means over ; her future shall be mightier than her mighty past. India shall wield a power greater than the Imperial, if only her people will realize her true strength and utilize it, leading a life in which Spirit shall guide and love shall inspire. Then indeed shall she be immortal. But if she deserts that ideal, and strives only for material gains, then shall she surely die, as all her contemporaries of the past have died. . . .

—1911, *Central Hindu College*

India's future lies not in political greatness ; India's future is as a spiritual nation, as the teacher of the world in spiritual

truth... And so, looking forward and hoping, we see her awaking from the sleep of centuries, taking up again her ancient faith, taking up again her ancient religion, her ancient philosophy, her ancient literature ; taking up again her place as evolver of the inner man, as teacher of the possibilities of the human soul, as leader of the way towards union with the higher nature, and, therefore, towards the higher and grander race that in days to come shall tread upon our earth. For the future is not with the things of the body ; it is with the things of the soul. The body perishes, but the soul is immortal. Civilizations rise and fall, but the spirit of man endureth for ever. Like that from which it springs, it is indivisible and immortal, unborn and undying, taking body after body as a garment and throwing them aside when they are worn and done with. That is the mission of India to the world, that teaching is the claim of India to the love and to the homage of mankind. And the day shall surely come when sleeping India shall awake and rise again amongst the people, and rise, not to lead them along the road of material domination, but along the road of spiritual triumph to union at last with the Supreme Goal.

—Lecture delivered, 6 November 1893

## ***INDIA'S MISSION AMONG NATIONS***

Every person, every race, every nation, has its own particular keynote which it brings to the general chord of life and of humanity... India... struck the note of spiritual greatness, of pure devotion to a spiritual ideal, of worship that asked only to become what it adored, of the gathering of spiritual knowledge... This spirituality of India has, then,



been her contribution to the world's progress, and it has manifested itself in the dual aspect of wisdom and devotion, Jnana and Bhakti. Thus she has wedded philosophy and religion and shown them both as aspects of spirituality, the noblest religion enshrined in the sublimest philosophy. Not without significance it is that in the great temple at Madura, the worshipper must stop and pay homage to Ganesha ere he can pass onward to the shrine of Shiva, for Mahadeva, the great God, must be offered wisdom as well as love by His devotee, if the devotee would pass into the innermost recess and pay his homage to the lotus-feet of Maha-yogi, the source of wisdom as of love.

And it is the perpetual affirmation of spirituality as the highest good that is India's mission to the world. As her past glory resulted from her spiritual knowledge and devotion, so must her future be based on the revival and re-proclamation of the same. Her genius is for religion and not for politics, and her most gifted children are needed as spiritual teachers, not as competing candidates in the political arena. Let lesser nations and lesser men fight for conquest, for place, and for power ; these gimcracks are toys for children, and the children should be left to quarrel over them. India is the one country in the world in which it is still easy to be religious, in which the atmosphere of the land and the psychic currents are not yet wholly penetrated with materiality. If religion perish here, it will perish everywhere, and in India's hand is laid the sacred charge of keeping alight the torch of spirit amid the fogs and storms of increasing materialism. If the torch drops from her hands, its flame will be trampled out by the feet of hurrying

multitudes, eager for worldly good, and India, bereft of spirituality, will have no future, but will pass on into the darkness, as Greece and Rome have passed.

—Lecture delivered 6 November 1893, *The Birth of New India*

## INDIA'S DESTINY—WORLD SAVIOUR

This first offshoot of the great Âryan Race had settled in the northern parts of India. It had there served as the model, the world-model, for a nation. That was its function. A religion, embracing the heights and depths of human thought, able to teach the ryot in his field, able to teach the philosopher and the metaphysician in his secluded study, a world-embracing religion, had been proclaimed through the lips of the Rishis of this first offshoot of the Race. Not only a religion, but also a polity, an economic and social order, planned by the wisdom of a Manu, ruled at first by the Manu Himself. Not only a religion and a polity, but also the shaping of the individual life on the wisest lines—the successive Varnas, the successive Ashramas; the stages of life, in the long life of the individual, were marked in the castes, and each caste life of the embodied Jivatma reproduced in its main principles, in the individual life, the Âshramas through which a man passed between birth and death. Thus perfectly thought out, thus marvellously planned, this infant civilization was given to the Race as a world-model, to show what might be done where Wisdom ruled and Love inspired.

The word spoken out by that ancient model was the word Dharma—Duty, Fitness, Right Order. Gradually, like all

things human, it deteriorated, and grew weaker and weaker. It had done its work, in building up for the world a model, from which the younger nations of the world might take what parts they could, and build them into their own civilizations.

Another function, grander, diviner, more wonderful, was now to come to the sacred Eastern Land, and it was to prepare it for that function that Shri Krishna wrought out the change. India, that had been a world-model of ordered duty in her divinely-moulded peoples, was in the far-off future—which to His divine eyes was not distant, for what is distance to the Deity to whom past and future are but one eternal present?—*to serve not as world-model but as World-Saviour* ; that is the key to the later events. No nation may come to such high office save by treading the valley of the shadow of death, and by drinking to the very dregs the bitter cup of humiliation ; for that Shri Krishna came—to make it possible, and to make it inevitable. No hands less loving than those of an Avatara might start the Indian nation on the path, the bitter path of humiliation and of suffering. And this dominates—as you will see if you read His life-story carefully—this dominates His policy right through. He never swerves, He never changes. All His work, into which He throws His matchless power, is guided by this farsighted, unswerving, changeless, will. The changeless will is there, in whatever veil of *mâyâ* He may, for the time, enwrap Himself. He wills to shape this land, this race, to be a World-Saviour. What does the shaping mean ? It means : first humiliation ; and has not India passed through humiliation after humiliation ? Who can look back to her as

she existed in the splendour of her past, and see her, Empress of the worlds of spirit and of mind, with her triple crown of spiritual knowledge, of intellectual power, and of prosperity unbounded, and then, looking around today, see her discrowned, without tears, tears of the very heart, more like to drops of blood? And yet, the Lord of Love on Kurukshetra made that very destiny possible which today we see ; nay, made it inevitable.\* He broke into pieces the hard wall of steel, wrought of the swords of her Kshattriya caste ; He slew them by their own sharp swords, this, the mighty Lord of All, for He had come as time of doom :

Time am I, laying desolate the world,  
Made manifest on earth to slay mankind ;  
Not one of all these warriors ranged for strife  
Escapeth death.

The hour had struck ; the swords of the Kshattriyas shivered against each other in fratricidal strife. The bodies of the Kshattriyas were left corpses on the plain of Kurukshetra. The struggle for a kingdom resulted in the dissolution of two kingdoms and modern India was born. The forehead with the triple crown was cast down into the dust, so that the destroying waves of invasion might sweep over her time after time. Alexander came, and swept over the northern lands, and his armies rolled back again to Greece, enriched with eastern thought. Still bitterer the passion, still more cruel the humiliation, when wave after wave of the northern Asian nations, from Mongolia, from Turkestan, holding the fiercest form of the faith of Islâm, the Islâm of the sword not of the pen, rolled over her and strove to overwhelm the faith of the Hindu people, and the Mughal throne was

set up on the very site where Yudhishthira had reigned. Later still, one European nation after another played with the dice of war and commerce for the ruling of India. Her embankments were gone. No warriors or armaments, however heroic, were strong enough to stem the flood; the waves of the ocean of invasion swept from coast to coast and submerged the whole. It was the hour of her passion, of her crucifixion among the nations.

Lifted high upon her cross of pain, jeered at and mocked, derided and scorned, her robes of beauty the spoil of the contemptuous soldiery, she has hung there dying, these many hundred years. But when you have told of the humiliation and the passion, of the crucifixion and the wounding, you have told only half the story of a World-Saviour; for after the passion comes the resurrection, as inevitably as day follows night. And if you look with clear-eyed vision, unblinded by the tears provoked by that story of the humiliation and the passion, you will see that as each wave of conquest swept over the land, it fertilized the land, it did not really destroy it. And each wave, on rolling back, carried back with it something wherewith to fertilize its own land, and left in India some new thought, some fresh idea, some treasure to enrich her ever-growing thought. A destructive flood it seemed, when you looked at it from the outer side of invasion. A fertilizing flood it was known to be, looked at from the inner side, like the Nile that floods Egypt so that all the land seems drowned, but on that flood the crops of the coming season depend. For does not the Avatara guide the world? And out of seeming evil, He brings unceasing good. And because He loves, and is wise as well as loving,

with unswerving hands He guides His chosen through the valley of misery and the hell of humiliation, in order that, purified by suffering and enriched by the experience gathered from many nations who came to mingle with her own, the World-Saviour might arise glorious on the morning of resurrection, to shed new light over the whole world, instead of the light being shed on one nation only.

Such was the meaning of the coming of Shri Krishna, and such the work that the Avatara saw before Him, and with unchanging will steadfastly carried out. But herein lies for us another lesson, for we observe that in carrying out the end, He never forgot or failed to use the means which Right Order demanded at the time. Do you remember how, before the battle-day dawned, Shri Krishna went to the court of the King Dhritarashtra, and how with His matchless eloquence, His golden tongue, He pleaded there for peace? You remember how He called Duryodhana, how against his obstinacy He matched His patience, and against his mad folly His own sweet wisdom; how mild His words, how tactful His suggestions; nay, when all else had failed, even a partial unveiling of His form as Ishvara, in order that He might strive to the uttermost to carry conviction to the hearts opposed to Him and bent on fatal war. So many efforts for peace, and yet He knew that war was inevitable. Such striving after the unattainable, such endeavours to bring about things which would have frustrated His own mission. How strange that seems to our purblind eyes. But how necessary, and how wise when we begin to see. For although He knew that those efforts would fail in the purpose of the moment, though He knew that war was

inevitable and Himself willed that war, and was resolute to bring it about, none the less He knew that duty must be performed, and it was His duty as patriot and as statesman to strive for peace with every human power He possessed. He knew in His divine wisdom that the value of effort does not lie in the immediate success, as success may be counted by you and me ; that efforts, directed to noble ends, are never lost, but are an ever-accumulating force, and that the future success could not work itself out correctly and perfectly, if one of those efforts were lacking, if one of those struggles were not made. He knew the secret of all action. He knew that right action is not wrought by the wise for the immediate and apparent fruit of action ; that right action ought always to be performed, even though inevitable failure waits to meet it, and He well knew that all those efforts of His were forces, energies, necessary to bring about the ultimate result in what is still to us the far-off future. Those efforts for peace made by Shri Krishna, frustrated as they seemed to be at the time by the wilfulness of Duryodhana, those efforts are part of the energies that are making for peace universal in the future, when the need for the lessons of war will be over, and the white wings of peace will brood over a world at rest.

—December 1905, *Convention Lectures*

## **A RESERVOIR OF POWER**

For all who are Theosophists the destiny of India looms large in their Theosophical horizon. It is "the land of my Master," as H.P.B. told us. It is also the land of the other Great Ones, since among the many nations of the world

today it is the land where there is an Inner Peace in the life of the people which reflects the great Peace within Them. It is a land that is old and yet full of youth ; a land of hoary traditions, yet emerging out of them to build herself into a new and mighty Nation. When India achieves her destiny, the charm which the peoples of the West already find in India will be increased an hundredfold. For throughout the ages, from the thousands of shrines in this land, from every banyan tree and bo-tree at whose foot a saint has meditated, there has radiated a network of magnetism whose influence is felt as the charm of India. But largely, even now, these centres of magnetism are unreleased, and have not spent their full vigour, and generation after generation each shrine and temple has become the reservoir of mighty forces awaiting the great day of the Coming of the Lord. . . . Many are the whispers in this land of mystery from rock and tree, from forest and shrine ; for ages they have whispered of the great Day to be, and now these whispers have changed to a chant of triumph. For what the high Gods decree, no puny human will may thwart, and where the Hand of the Highest on Earth is upraised in protection and benediction, there all opposition dies away, for His Will is victory and triumph.

—August 1907, *The Theosophist*

## **THE MASTER-BUILDER**

I believe in the Plan . . . and part of that Plan was to bring the English traders to India for a good that was seen in the then far-off future. The preparation has been going on for long, but . . . the end is sure. The end is sure because there



is a Plan, because the Divine Architect has drawn that Plan, because this ancient country has the right to express herself and to be as free in her own country as you are in yours. That is the goal which we are striving for—many of us, I think, most of us would hope that the goal may be reached in peace and not in struggle, so that India and England may remain friends and comrades, friends and comrades on an equal footing. No other friendship or comradeship is any longer possible. . . . I look forward not with hope only, but with a feeling of certainty that that which has been foreseen shall be accomplished ere many years have passed. . . .

A Master-BUILDER wants many builders for his helping. . . . Only by free choice between the good and the evil . . . the better and the worse . . . between every vice and every virtue, can man grow in the image of the Master-BUILDER, the Divine Architect of the world in which we live.

There you will find the answer to many problems. The day shall come, far off but growing ever nearer with every year that passes, when man shall truly be in the image of God, with his will free as the Divine Will is free, but by himself determined to Good.

—18 August 1928, *New India*

## **CENTRE OF A WORLD COMMONWEALTH**

Benjamin Disraeli, who became Premier of Great Britain, Lord Beaconsfield, was a man eastern in heart, though he dominated a typical western Nation, a man revelling in the splendour of an eastern imagination, and with his mind ever steeped in the poetry and glamour of the East. When he won for the British Monarch, in the teeth of British prejudice

and democratic feeling, the splendid title of Emperor of India, he argued for the adding of the Imperial to the Royal Crown, and he said that in the changes among Nations Asia again might have her turn in Empire, and that it might be that the centre of the Empire might shift from the unruly West to the loyal East, when the Monarch of the Empire might be enthroned in the great continent of India, instead of in the little Island of the northern seas.

A splendid ideal, a glorious possibility ; but let such possibility be the parent of duty. . . Those Nations only are worthy of freedom whose citizens have conquered passion and have achieved self-control. Only among such citizens, only in an India peopled by such men, could the centre of the Empire be established.

—29 February 1908, *The East and the West*

## **THE QUEEN-MOTHER**

Let those who know not the Indian spirit say what they will, misrepresent as they choose. Let us who work for the Mother forget everything save her cause, and do not make the fight for liberty more difficult by desire to resent insults, levelled after all at the personality which cannot touch the Spirit, which cannot soil the real life. And so with brave hearts but gentle hearts as well, let us go onwards together to the victory which Ishvara will give to His people, for the days of Indian subjection are over and the days of her suffering are accomplished (cheers). The discrowned Queen is coming to her own, and let the Mother, when she comes among her children, find love in their hearts, courage in their actions, that we may be worthy to welcome to her

throne that mightiest and holiest of Nations—the Indian people.

—24 September 1917, *New India*

Not for ever shall the birthplace of the two mightiest religions known on earth sit mourning as a widow, bereft of God's divinest gift, the gift of Liberty. For her, too, and that ere long, shall the voices of her Rishis and her Devas ring out the trumpet-call: "Arise! Shine! Thy Light has come! For the Glory of the Lord has risen upon thee."

—25 December 1918, *New India*

Will the Year now born, 1918, bring us Peace? God grant it. Yet only if the coming of Peace would mean true blessing to the world, and not a breathing space to recover for fiercer war. For if Might could triumph over Right, and the rod of oppression could remain unbroken, whether in East or West, then were Peace a deadlier curse than war.

\*                      ✨                      \*                      ✨

What has the New Year hidden in his bosom for our India? Does he hold the sure and certain promise of the Freedom that we strive for? Is it the rising of the Sun of Liberty that is painting the fair rose of dawn on our horizon?

—January 1918, *The Theosophist*

## THE TEMPLE OF HUMANITY

Nobody can say that the Allies have wholly triumphed. There is a state of turmoil and unrest which is persisting throughout Europe. Nor can that end, unless India comes to her place.

The next stage of the Plan is the building up of a free Commonwealth of Nations in which India plays her equal part. That is why the English came here and others had to go away ; and the one Nation that is free in her institutions in her own island, if not free in her practice outside her own island, is the English Nation, chosen to come here and blend with the Indian Nation in the building up now of the World Empire, to be really a World Commonwealth, not a World Empire which was to rule by force, but a World Federation which was to govern by love and in peace. That is the ideal towards which some of us are trying to work, towards which the Manu is working, and He asks for cooperation from His elder children here, to bring together East and West, not for themselves alone but for the future good of the world ; to draw them together, not losing their characteristics but harmoniously blending them for the helping of future generations, with the great spiritual ideals of India and the great material and scientific progress of Britain. These two are to be the main constituents of this Commonwealth, which is to be the model of the World Commonwealth of the future. It is a model on a small scale of internationalism—the British race consisting of different Nations scattered all over the world, drawn into equal partnership, equal Commonwealth of mutual service, of mutual love, of mutual help, and not of tyranny on the one side and of subjection on the other. That is the great building which Vaivasvata Manu is trying to bring about, against the clashing Wills of men and against all the strivings of the ignorant and, far worse against those Powers of Darkness who are ever the opponents of the Brothers of Light.

You have heard of Asuras, and you know that in the long run even Asuras are compelled to cooperate with the Divine Will. All that they can do is to resist the speed of progress. Asuras cannot stop the chariot of God which rolls along the track of evolution, but they can delay it, retard it, and inflict greater pain and suffering upon men.

It is on the men in India that the great burden of that choice is falling today. India is now divided into two great camps and two only: one camp marked by love and the other by hate, one camp marked by love of liberty and the other by desire to tyrannize, one marked by cooperation and the other by antagonism. It is for you to choose which of these camps you will strengthen. I cannot say to you, members of The Theosophical Society: "Join that camp, join this camp," but I can say to you as Theosophists, to you as members of The Theosophical Society, that for forty-five years this teaching has been in the world and you ought to know more about it than the outer world. The outer world may be moved by temporary injuries, carried away by wrongs inflicted and sufferings endured, but you, students of the Wisdom, ought to realize, that behind all these outside things, the Inner Government of the world is ruling and ultimately must have its way, in one of two ways, by destruction or by evolution: yours is the choice. If you find a movement marked by hatred, if you find a movement marked by tyranny over the opinions of others, by trying to force people along lines that some of them may adopt, if you find those means are means of compulsion, of tyranny, of social ostracism, of spreading hatred in India and dividing her more than she had ever been divided before, I tell you, no matter

who may lead it, no matter who may join it, that is a movement of Brothers of the Shadow and leads to destruction. Those are the marks that show what they are. The Lords of Light sent our Society for this great crisis, to save the Indian Motherland. Every movement They instigate is moved by love, every movement They instigate is moved by drawing together, by cooperating for the common end, for the common purpose, and for common work ; and as the mark of the sixth sub-race is to make a union and not to combat further, to work hand in hand and not strike each other, therefore, in this great critical moment of transition, the decision has come to the Mother and to her children scattered over the far wide world to choose. Will you follow the teachings of your ancient Rishis ? Will you reform abuses, but keep the central treasure in your hands in which there is the spiritualization of the world ? You alone can save the world from going down into the gulf of materialism ; India alone, with her glorious past, with her religion which contains everything that every later religion has given to a portion of the Race—India, the Mother, has the right to spiritualize the world, and with spirituality to bring back to the world intellectual greatness, to bring back to it all the beauty of devotion as well as the splendour of the mind. The centre of the conflict is transferred from Europe to Asia. India is the heart of Asia, and on the decision of India the whole immediate future depends.

—December 1920, *The Great Plan*

## A COMMONWEALTH OF BROTHERHOOD

*To Britons in London, a few months later, Dr. Besant said :*

Now of Great Britain, I ask : What is her place in the Plan ? Great Britain has a possibility before her, and a power of accomplishing that possibility, which are not so great in any other Nation in the world . . . The tendencies everywhere are not only towards Union within the Nation, but of Union of larger Nations as we go on in evolution . . . Now Britain has the opportunity to make a mighty Empire—Empire I call it for a moment, for its name has been Empire hitherto . . . Britain's opportunity is hers, because all round the world there are Free Nations that have sprung from her, that you call the Self-Governing Dominions, and other lands that have been acquired largely by the help of their own people, and which you call Dependencies or Colonies ; they, all that huge possibility of all those varied Nations, not only of white people but of coloured, not only of western Nations but of eastern, not only of Europe but of Asia, are awaiting federation. Think what it means if, for the first time in the world, a Power as strong as you admittedly are today, instead of relying on strength, tries to seek for and to do justice. Instead of trying to tyrannize over others, open to them the gates of Freedom, and say to all the Nations that make up this great Empire : “ Come and form with us not an Empire, but a great Commonwealth of Free Nations ; not a white Commonwealth, but a Commonwealth into which men of every race, of every colour, of every ancestry, of every creed, of every tradition and custom, shall come willingly as free members.” Ah ! If Britain can do that,

then she will do her part in the Great Plan. That is her place; that is her opportunity. No other Nation with dominions so widespread and so varied can build up that mighty Commonwealth of Brotherhood, of all the races of every faith, of every colour, of every line of thought. Have you the strength to do it? I believe you have. Have you the love to do it? I hope you have.

That is your place in the Plan; take it or leave it. It is your decision, your right to say what you will do. But if you can do it, if you will do it, if you will encourage Freedom and not try to hold her back, if you will welcome her everywhere where your power extends; if you will help, strengthen, inspire, lead, but let the Nations take their Freedom and be your brothers and not your subjects—then you will do more than build a mighty Commonwealth; you will build a Model, which the world shall copy; you will build a Temple, which shall become the model for the Temple of Humanity; within your own power you will make Freedom extend everywhere over your Dominions, and thus set an example that other Nations shall follow; for you will never reach true Internationalism until the Nations have recognized their Brotherhood, and have willingly joined together in bonds of Love, of Amity, and of Freedom.

—July 1921, *Britain's Place in the Great Plan*

## **THE COMING ARYAN EMPIRE**

Two views of India's future have been put forward: one that India is effete and is passing into decay, to vanish as Babylonia and Egypt have vanished; the other, that she has a future greater than her past, and is destined to rise to a



peak of dazzling glory, the Heart of the greatest Empire that the world has yet seen. It is the second of these two views that I have been doing my best to popularize as an inspiring Ideal during the last seventeen years, and it was for the helping of the realization of this Ideal that I joined hands with others to found our beloved Central Hindu College.

The evolution of Humanity is guided by a mighty Brotherhood of Sages—of Rishis, as They are called in India—who constantly watch over it, choosing Their agents; sending them hither and thither; mingling the blood of races to produce new combinations; building up Empires—by sending into birth in the chosen centres egos of advanced evolution—spiritual, intellectual, moral; pulling them down again, when their use is over, by withdrawing these egos and sending into them egos of low evolution; preparing for a foreseen end for hundreds of thousands of years; working out the details of a mighty plan committed to Their charge. From time to time, when it suits Their purpose, They divulge a fragment of Their plan, that it may win conscious cooperation from the willing and the devoted. The present is such a time and a corner of the veil has been lifted.

Through much tribulation has India been guided for some five thousand years, in order that by conquests, colonizations, wars, tumults, and manifold grindings of the divine Wheel, various races and sub-races might be mingled in the blood of her children, to enrich the current of her life. Long long ago a mighty Atlantean civilization ruled in India, while, in a huge Empire, with its centre at Shamballa, the Aryan Root-Race grew and multiplied under its Manu, and His lieutenants the Divine Kings, while He prepared and sent forth its

subraces to occupy and subdue the near and further West. Over it He watched, improving and refining, until—the dispersing work over—He sent it southwards gradually to occupy the land destined to be the cradle of the future Aryan Empire, carrying with it the tradition of a past Golden Age. Some mighty intellects He sent to India to take birth in it, to build its literature, and from time to time, some lofty ego to inspire its spiritual life. Then He sent these intellectual giants to take birth elsewhere, in other branches of His Aryan Race, to develop many-sided capacities, to grow in different soils prepared to evolve definite characteristics ; wherever they went, the nation in which they incarnated became the crest of the evolutionary wave.

Differentiation had done its work, and the time for re-integration began to dawn. Messenger after messenger was sent to the West, in order to permeate its turbulent civilizations with the higher spiritual ideas ; splendid intellects were sent thither to lead it onwards to heights of scientific knowledge and artistic achievement. In the nineteenth century the time had come for “ a more sympathetic mutual understanding between East and West,” between the elder and younger Branches of the Aryan family, and for this The Theosophical Society was founded ; it was sent to bring to the West the forgotten spiritual knowledge of the East ; to lead it to drink at the long-sealed Aryan wells ; it was sent to recall to the East the memory of its own treasures, to revive Aryan ideals, and to bring to it the accumulated treasures of western learning, to knit together its warring elements into a single nation, and above all to blend into one the eldest and the youngest children of the Aryan Race,

the Indians and the English. On this union, close, brotherly, indissoluble, the future Empire depends. And it is inevitable ; Those who strive against it will be eliminated, for the will of the great Father must be wrought out. The rebellious, the haters, the inciters to strife, will be scattered among other nations, among nations backward in evolution, where their unpleasant peculiarities may work less harm. When the union is accomplished, when the field is ready, then Vaivasvata Manu will send hither the master intellects of humanity, to raise the people composed of the best elements of His race to a dazzling height of glory, and the great Aryan Empire will stand revealed.

—October 1910, *Central Hindu College Magazine*

## O INDIA ! AWAKE ! ARISE !

○ India ! ○ Perfect Nation !  
 ○ India that shall be !  
 How long till Thou take station ?  
 How long ere thralls live free ?  
 How long ere all Thy Soul  
 Be one with all Thy sea ?

○ People of India, whom, I have striven for more than half a century to serve, is it not time to stop wasting your strength on fragments of bondage, instead of breaking that bondage once for all, meeting Britons as their equals, not as their inferiors, and clasping hands of friendship—God grant it be not too late !—for the helping of the world ?

Let all else wait. This equal alliance is necessary for the sake of the Peace of the World. This alliance concluded, East and West, Asia and Europe, will march together, side by side, for the helping of Humanity. —1 May 1930, *New India*

## CONSECRATION

Turn inwards and say : " My body, my tongue, my brain, my mind, I consecrate for the service of the Motherland," and go and serve her. Surely none can resist the demand of a united Nation. You must be united in your demand.

.. Freedom comes from God. He has the right to give it, but no Nation can give it to another.

You were so mighty in your past even in the days of comparative degradation by assimilating all that the conquerors brought to the conquered people. Mother India swallowed them all to make them of her own flesh and of her own blood. We know no differences now between Muslim, Hindu, Parsi, Christian, and Jew. All those who belong to the various sects of Hinduism are our brethren, and we are all common worshippers in the Temple of our Mother, and, like the Temple of Jagannath at Puri, which knows no difference in worship, that Mother knows no division among the children of her heart and womb. Let us leave this sacred place, sacred because it is the Temple of Liberty, carrying India in our hearts, in our lips, and in our brains, so that when we meet again, we shall be on the road to freedom, a freedom that is worthy when a Nation demands it, and when a Nation demands it and when a Nation takes it, it shall lead you to a height that even ancient India was not able to touch. For you are stronger even than that ancient India and the measure of the greatness of your past is not even the measure of the height of your future.—From the closing of the Congress Presidential Address, 1917, for the first time reprinted from 1 January 1918, *New India*.

*INDIA*

God save our Motherland,  
God bless our much-loved Land ;  
God save our Ind !

Sing of her story old,  
Sing of her heroes bold,  
Sing of her hearts of gold ;  
God save our Ind !

Sing Ramachandra's praise,  
Sing of the Rajput days ;  
God save our Ind !

Sing of great Akbar's sway,  
Sing of Shivaji's day,  
Sing boldly Freedom's lay ;  
God save our Ind !

Lord of the Burning Ground,  
Send forth Thy damru sound ;  
God save our Ind !

Grant us the hero heart,  
Careless of loss or smart,  
As men to play our part ;  
God save our Ind !

# VII. *Dr. Besant's Clarion Call to the India of Today*

IN HER OWN VIBRANT

AND INCOMPARABLE WORDS

*As "The Call" is a cento or blend of utterances, before quoting, please refer to the pages of the text of this book, "Annie Besant—Builder of New India," the numbers of which are noted in the left-hand margin.*

WHEN Annie Besant was sent to India by India's Guardians to awaken the ancient Motherland, cherished land of the spiritually Great of all ages, of all lands, and of all faiths, India was not ready ; and the Clarion Call from beyond the Himalayan range fell upon unheeding ears, voiced though it was by one who loved India as rarely she has been loved before.

With Swarâj placed within the very grasp of the people by the messenger of the Gods herself, India's leaders, divided among themselves, rejected it, and thus committed India to her present disastrous disunity and impotence at the very time when in free strength she might have saved the world from its awful distress.

Yet the Clarion Call still sounds forth as it was voiced by Annie Besant twenty-five years and more ago.

Its words are still the same—her words, the words of the greatest orator and statesman of the age.

As she called then, so she still calls, and will call until the Call is heard and India's Soul is free.

Hear the Call once more and heed it, O children of the Motherlands of India and of Britain, that together you may be a Brotherhood strong to keep the world in Peace and Happiness !

—GEORGE S. ARUNDALE

## DR. BESANT'S CLARION CALL

- 14      Today is a supreme moment in the history of the world and those who truly know must work from every part of the world to what is a common end.
- 276      While the thunder of guns rolls over the battlefields where Nations are at death-grips ; in this hour of waiting, while the destinies of Empires are flung into the scales of War ; we, in India, have time for serious thinking, for solemn preparation, for that serious constructive work on which the immediate future of India depends.

### **WORK FOR INDIA !**

- 15      Wherever else you may be working, remember India, think of Her, know Her to be the true Hope of the Nations of the World. Work for India as opportunity offers. You hasten the growth of all that is dear to you as you hasten the growth of India. For India is the veritable Holy Land of the world.
- 24      The West realizes its own turmoil and is looking elsewhere for light. Where should the light come from ? From the East, where the Sun is ever shining, where the laws of the Great Law-Giver were given to all His Aryan children, not only to those who settled in India, but to those who wandered Westward and lost their way to their Father's home.



45 To India, rootstock of the mighty Aryan Race, were committed those treasures of spiritual wisdom which are held by her for the healing of the Nations, and also the fundamental principles of man in Society, on which alone can be built a civilization which shall endure.

49 The Indian will has been asleep. But today there is before India an Ideal to rouse that will into mightiest power—the dream of India's one and indivisible, the dream of India mighty among the Nations of the earth once more. The dreamers have seen it and you shall achieve it.

20 The uniqueness of the Indian civilization consisted in the fact that it was all framed for a spiritual purpose, planned to assist spiritual evolution, every act of life a religious  
21 service. It was when her people thus believed that India  
23-4 was great. The fundamental idea in Manu's polity for the Aryan race is that of Duty. Today we need to hold up again the old ideal.

26 Only in the woman is the old ideal preserved, and in her self-sacrifice lies the salvation of India. The future welfare of the Indian State depends on the re-establishment of the old ideal of the Family with its mutual sacrifice and mutual service, and mutual helpfulness.

41-3 Spirituality, reverence, courtesy, hospitality, charity—these were the social virtues of the Aryan householder that rendered him so gracious a type. The Aryan character-foundation, the bedrock of Truth. Fearlessness, with tenderness for its other aspect, was a distinguishing characteristic of the Aryan type. If India is again to hold up her head among nations, India's younger children must begin to lay the foundation in their own lives of the Aryan type of

character. The revival of these virtues among the Aryan youth would presage the rebuilding of the Nation. Character makes destiny, and Indian destiny depends on Indian Character. Here is work for the young whose hearts burn with love for the Motherland, for on the altar of pure morality alone can fall the fire from Heaven which changes the fuel of aspiration into spiritual flame.

43 India; always Aryan, the <sup>\*</sup>MOTHER Imperishable—the  
20 magic of her immemorial past, the spell of her death-  
less fascination !

45 Today she is renewing her youth like the phoenix, and  
from the pyre of temporary subjection she is arising, the  
same Nation, but purified, enriched to a future greater than  
her past.

### ***BE STRONG FOR LIBERTY !***

54 As surely as the thickness of earth-born clouds can put  
out the Sun, so surely can no folly and no crime put out  
Liberty, though they may delay for a while its rays from  
falling upon a portion of the globe.

54-5 So I would urge on you to think of Liberty day after day,  
meditate on her, long for her, feel her absence as you  
would feel the absence of the one dearest to you in all  
the world, that your heart may ever be aching since that  
liberty is not yours. You should realize that Liberty is the  
one great Devi without whom no country is worth the name  
of a Nation, and when you feel that, you will have to cry  
out for it, and then you will be seen by the world as worthy  
of the freedom you are demanding and liberty will come  
to your arms.

- 54 The only Indian patriot is the man who loves India first and foremost above every other country.

### ***CLAIM INDIA'S BIRTHRIGHT!***

- 58 What is Justice? It is giving to every man his birth-right, and that birthright is Freedom, Swarāj, Home Rule.

- 60 Let full Responsible Government be established in India within a definite period to be fixed by Statute, and a Bill to that effect be introduced into Parliament at once. Let India's leaders be taken into confidence now, and treated as recognized sharers in the perils and triumphs of the struggle. Let us all feel that we are one in heart and aim, that we are free men fighting beside free men for a common heritage of Freedom.

- 60 The old martial spirit is not dead. Drill us, arm us,  
62 officer us with our own countrymen, make us a huge citizen army, and take if you will, the flower of our troops to fight abroad. But let us fight under the banner of Liberty, for nothing less than the hope of that will nerve our men to fight and our women to sacrifice.

- 75 May it not be that, in this terrible War, there may be developed by the wondrous alchemy of God a binding material to unite the East and West?

- 15 India is the centre of that great storm which shall usher in a splendid peace.

- 78 Would not true statesmanship turn India into a buttress of the British Commonwealth, the Premier Nation of Asia, the pledge of the world's enduring peace, a field made fertile for all good by mutual love?

- 77        Then shall Britain and India together stand as guardians of the peace of the world.
- 78        Without India, Britain would fall from her position as the greatest of World Powers, while with India, and possibly relinked with the United States in close alliance, she would lead the forward evolution of Humanity for centuries to come.
- 114       I have fought unflinchingly against Non-Cooperation, the great disruptive movement engineered by the Lords of Darkness against the union of Britain and India as the day of their partnership was rapidly approaching, and that promise of the World-Commonwealth, the dawn of the Indo-British Commonwealth, was on the horizon, the Commonwealth which means World Peace and World Prosperity, and the spiritualizing of Humanity. The desperate struggle which is to decide the destiny of both countries is proceeding, and they will either march forward hand-in-hand for the uplifting of the world, or torn asunder, will lose their place of leadership—Britain to sink into a second-rate Power, and India to pass into an era of invasion and spoliation, the helpless prey of the northern Asia tribes, from which the strong shield of Britain and her own British-trained warrior sons now protect her.

### **OPPOSE REVOLUTION !**

- 126       The Non-Cooperation movement has produced an un-  
86       paralleled crop of hatred, violence, and lawlessness.  
      regard it as the greatest setback to India's freedom that  
89       has been started. At the peril of ruin does a State forget that " Order is Heaven's first law."

- 90      Let us during this time of danger, drop all criticism of Government action, and stand firmly by the Government against revolution which means bloodshed at home and invasions from abroad.
- 153-4    Because so much lies in the scales of Destiny—no less than the world passing on into peace and happiness, strongly aided by the Indo-British Commonwealth, the model of the World Commonwealth of the future, or the setback of the world for many generations, I call on all students and lovers of Theosophy, the Divine Wisdom, to range themselves under the banner of ordered and progressive Freedom, and to oppose the threatened anarchy. I have no authority to command—for The Society is democratic in its constitution—and can only call from the Watch-Tower, and warn all who are intuitive of the peril in which we stand.
- 291      Do nothing to increase the spirit of hate, even towards those who are our enemies in the physical world today ; remember that they also are our human brothers, separated now by a gulf of blood and of misery ; but love can build bridges across the gulf and look forward to a future where the Nations shall be once more at one. You cannot go wrong in love ; you are sure to go wrong in hate.
- 186      The flood of destructive human passions is set free by Hate, and rushes on its devastating way. Let every member of The Theosophical Society in India set himself to the task of stemming this flood, in the Name of the Lord of Love.
- 158      It is a glorious time for the young men and women today, young folk in the fullness of strength and vigour,

gazing open-eyed and fearless at the problems of the day, ready to test their strength in the handling of them.

161 It is not right that the boys' warm hearts should be used by elder people to foment public discontent and to harass Government.

163-4 Mob violence is freedom's worst enemy. When India has Swarāj, how are her Governments to deal with brickbat-throwing mobs? Are they to be allowed to kill and maim as they choose, to fire houses, to burn living men to death? It is just in the moment of popular excitement, necessarily accompanying any movement for a Nation's Rights, that the lovers of freedom must speak out for the preservation of order, and restrain their followers from every act of violence. *While we continue to work for Freedom, violent conspiracy, which uses bombs and revolvers, must be put down by the strong arm of the law.*

173 Non-Cooperation is a big gamble with anarchy as one stake and utter futility as the other. What then is the way out? What is left? Working to get our very best men into  
174 the Councils, Legislation for the uplift of the masses, for the removal of the poverty which is strangling India to death. It is the manly way of a virile Nation, conscious of its strength, but also conscious of its present limitations, and it is the shortest road to Home Rule.

177 Liberty is a great celestial Goddess, strong, beneficent, and austere, and she can never descend upon a nation by the shouting of crowds, nor by arguments of unbridled passion, nor by the hatred of class against class. You can only have a free nation when you have free men to build it  
178 out of—free men and women both. When Freedom

comes, she will come down to a nation in which every man and every woman will have learned self-control and self-mastery.

### ***STAND FOR THE BRITISH CONNECTION !***

171-3 Is the British yoke so intolerable as to justify revolution, whether by force of arms or by Non-Cooperation? I deny it. I do not think that most people recognize the immense change of spirit which has come over the administration. The large changes in India would make revolution a crime. Britain has sinned against India in holding back substantial reforms for so long. But Britain has also great virtues, and Cooperation with her will bring India more swiftly to fully responsible government than any other line of action.

186 Ill do they read the signs of the times who rashly strive to rend apart and to set in hostile camps the Asian and European branches of the great Aryan Race. Let the twain unite for the world's redemption, rather than destroy each other to the world's undoing. For the hope of the future lies in the twinship of these Nations and they who would tear them apart are the enemies of mankind.

179 Work actively for the preservation of the link between India and Britain. The immense importance of this link must be evident to every person of intelligence and foresight. It preserves peace between Asia and Europe. It stands as a barrier against the breaking out of war between the two continents, a war which would mean a conflict of coloured and white Humanity, probably accompanied by the destruction alike of Asiatic and European civilizations, to be followed by a new Dark Age period.

- 179 I desire intensely that Great Britain and India should remain united, for neither can perform her full mission to the world without the other. A Commonwealth of Free Nations, coloured and white, knit by love and mutual service, that is my Ideal, passionately loved and perseveringly worked for.
- 269 My dharma lies in obeying the order: to "claim India's place among the Nations," and to preserve the connexion with Britain for the helping of the world. So whether in a minority of one or in the future majority claiming Dominion Status, I work on with indifference to minority or majority. The Will of the Inner Government will be done at last, no matter what may be the size of the present parties. In the end, Their Will will triumph— the time is nothing.
- 184 We, whether English or Indian, who believe that these countries have been brought together for the good of the world, who believe that apart they will decay, while together they will renew their youth and mount up to heights hitherto undreamed of, we must by all we hold sacred, by our belief in God and by our duty to Humanity, work unweariedly, hope unchangeably, till Hope has become Realization, and India and Britain clasp hands in loving friendship, and enter the New Era side by side.
- 187 The ideal now is for peace, cooperation, protection, brotherhood and helpfulness. The essence of sin now lies in separateness.
- 189 We are all children of one Father; why should we quarrel on the journey home?
- 191 Let the Englishman trust the Indian, the Indian trust the Englishman; "forgetting the things that are behind, let us



reach forward to the things that are before," and work together for the happier age that is dawning. Over the storms of the time, let the white Dove of the Wisdom hover, emblem of knowledge and of love !

### INDIANS, UNITE !

188      My purpose is the drawing together of Musalmans and  
Hindus, for India can never become a nation until Hindus,  
Zoroastrians, Christians, and Musalmans understand each  
190      other. There is no difference for us between Hindu and  
Musalman. Both are Indians, both come from the womb  
of the Mother.

Children of the Mother, worshippers of one God, " the One without a second," why are you shaming both before the world by your quarrels, religious and political ? Is not the country greater than your parties ? Is not Religion greater than your religion ?<sup>1</sup>

Let the old antagonisms die. Let your country be the greater for the religious differences. Let the common welfare of the Nation be the care of every religion. Do not let your ship of nationality be shipwrecked on the rocks of religious hatred and religious suspicion.

195      The obvious thing today is to try to get rid of the opposition and make the common union shine out, the common demand for India's place among the nations, and not to quarrel over trivialities and refuse to walk together because the path may have here and there a rut.

291      Let us draw our bonds together, let us approach each other, and not repel each other ; for only thus will the

<sup>1</sup> 25 May 1927, *New India*.

Will of God be done, and the Brotherhood of Humanity be realized in our world.

- 195-6 We are all pledged to the common Mother, and to make her Queen in her own household, and all her children to find a place therein. Who shall dare to touch the Chair where India sits with hands unclean, so that they may soil the radiance of her purity?

Let us cast aside communal claims and quarrels, and let our only emulation be: Who shall serve best and who shall sacrifice most for the Motherland? Let us unite the experience of age with the enthusiasm of youth. Let us substitute the good of the Nation for struggles for safeguards, and burn up communalism in Nationality and Patriotism.<sup>1</sup>

- 200 I plead to you, Hindus and Muslims of the Congress and men of the League, to join in a common cry. One is the  
209 Motherland, one is the Nation! Two nations cannot co-exist on the same soil. We cannot have a Hindu nation and a Musalman nation in India. We must have one Indian Nation from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from Bengal to Kathiawar.

- 209-10 India is yet to be made a living reality, an organized entity, and you, the students of today, with tens of thousands of your like throughout the land, you are to be the builders of India, and from your hands she will emerge—a Nation. How shall the Indian Nation be born? How shall we smooth the path for her coming feet? We must make the history of India a common history, looking on all her great men as a common glory, on all her heroes as a

<sup>1</sup> 7 November 1929, *New India*.

common heritage. Hindus must learn to be proud of Akbar, Musalmans of Shivaji.

Just as stones are shaped and fitted, and then built into their respective places in an edifice, so must these boys be shaped and fitted by their several religions to be built into the Indian Nation. Let us, then, hold up as an Ideal the Indian Motherland, the Indian Nation ; let us popularize the Idea, till the heart of each Province throbs in unison ; then let her descend into the world of Facts ; let the Indian Nation be born !

488 India has to be born. How ? First by believing in her with a strenuous faith, for faith is a mighty power ; and then by thinking of her and aspiring after her as an Ideal.

364 If only every one of you would give one brief quarter of an hour's thought each morning to the future of India, and send out earnest wishes for her welfare, hopes for her revival, aspirations for her spiritual greatness, believe me you would make a force that would raise the Nation and would mould her future. Your thoughts would gather together, modelling, as it were, an ideal India that should take shape in the external world ; your prayers would gather together and ascend to the Feet of Mahadeva, whence would flow forth a regenerating energy that would manifest itself in teachers, in leaders, in guides of the people, who could move the hearts of men, and unite them into one mighty Unity. Such is your power over the future, such the service you may render India, for in thought is the power of the Supreme, and it is man's, because " Thou art Brahman."

- 327      One thing you must remember : that none outside yourselves can make India what she ought to be. No tongue of a foreigner can build India. It is Indians themselves must build their Nation, and they alone can make India what she ought to be, what she shall be in the days to come. No Government, no power, no friendship, no amount of eloquence can make a Nation. It is the men and women of the Nation only who can build it.

### ***SERVE THE MOTHERLAND !***

- 214-5    Awake to the need for Service ! A strong will is what you want. By thought and by will you may realize that to which you aspire.
- 212      There is an apathy far more dangerous than that of the people generally, and it is the apathy of those who have been appointed to help and guide India. The apathy of those who know destroys.
- 212      What answer can you expect to your call for unity, if there be absence of unity among yourselves—among you
- 213    who know ? Brotherhood among yourselves—true, unclouded Brotherhood, is the need, the imperative need today. And for this, each one of you is individually responsible. Where you are, there must Brotherhood be. Challenge yourselves. Do you bring disruption or virility ? Be utterly frank and true. Is there aught of disruption ? Have you not then a share of the responsibility for it ? Have you not contributed to it ? Have you fought it with all your power ? Have you been, above all, a harmonizing influence, a strong, unbreakable link in an otherwise crumbling chain ? Have you ever shown a spirit of sweet

reasonableness and ever-willing accommodation? Have you always given way, save in matters of vital principle, and even as regards these, have you maintained gently, respectfully, in a spirit of true comradeship? Maintain Brotherhood within. Unbrotherliness in the heart means disruption in the body.

216      Faith we need now in our Indian leaders, leaders in the noblest battle the world has ever seen, to restore India to freedom, to reestablish the greatness that lived through fifty centuries, and gave to the world unrivalled riches of spirituality, of intellect, of morality and of physical wealth.

216      All the powers which make for righteousness are on India's side today in her battle for liberty, for freedom of self-expression, for the saving of the culture of Asia of which she is the highest exponent, for the lifting of the world to a higher civilization than that which is passing away. Unless she steps forward now in advance, the death of the present civilization will mean anarchy, for only India can give the  
217      lead to the new. She has been the crucified among Nations. What shall her resurrection be but life to the world?

### ***BE INDIAN!***

220      I hope, having come to make my home in this Holy Land, to try to show you, to whom I belong by faith and by duty, the lines of practical reform which are needed if our India is to be saved. I hope, in concert with some of your most religious and pious men, to give that spiritual life for the lack of which we are failing, and for the lack of which the world itself is crying out.

- I know the old countries. I have lived there. They cannot  
 221 blind me with the glitter of their civilization, and they  
 cannot dazzle my eyes with the glory of their outer appear-  
 ance. I have been underneath to the slums and misery,  
 I know its folly ; I have lived in it. I know its wealth. I  
 know its luxury, and everything for which you are yearning  
 and which is dazzling the younger amongst you today. I  
 come back to you and say that this thing is a sham and  
 that it is a delusion, it means degradation and not rising ;  
 it means spiritual death and not life.
- 223-4 " Is modern India worthy of ancient India and are the  
 men in whose physical veins runs the blood of the Rishis  
 fit representatives of those mighty Beings ? " What answer  
 does modern India give to the question that is now coming  
 from the West with ever-increasing force ? When they  
 come here, are they to be greeted with a copy of their  
 own civilization and a second-hand repetition of the words,  
 of the thoughts, and of the manners with which they have  
 been wearied in the West ? If so, they will return disillu-  
 sioned from this ancient country and declare that, while it  
 may be great to be the physical descendants of the Rishis,  
 it would be greater to be the sons of Their mind, of Their  
 thought, of Their life, Their devotion, and Their spirituality.
- 225 Take from other nations whatever of value they have to  
 give you. But let your mental coinage bear the imprint of  
 your own Nation and not the imprint of the foreigner.  
 Enrich your civilization as much as you will by infusing into  
 it the gold, only the real gold, from foreign countries, but  
 let it remain Eastern still. Do not debase, but only enrich ;  
 do not de-nationalize, only increase the circle of your

national thought. Then the contact will be useful and not death-bringing ; then you will be better for the teaching of it, and not the worse, not corrupted but the purer for the  
224 contact. When you de-spiritualize an Indian, you denationalize him. Why does that go on ? Because you do not care.

255 We do not want another England, Scotland, France or Germany. We want an India—Indian in thought, Indian in ways and customs, Indian in aspirations, Indian from head to foot, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. That is the Nation of the future, and that is the Motherland that we worship.

227 There is only one Nation the world knows that may still choose the Spirit instead of the body, and spiritual knowledge rather than material gain—only one Nation amongst all the Nations of the world, only one people amongst all the peoples of the globe. That Nation is India, that people the Indian people ; and if you, the last hope of the spiritual life of man, if you give everything to matter, then in your apostasy the world is betrayed, and in your spiritual death humanity shall find its grave.

226 I claim from the children that come from the womb of India that there shall be some worthy of the past, that there shall be some worthy of their Mother, that there shall be some who shall give her what she asks ; thought, philosophy, literature, science, the great things that she loves, and not merely the struggles of parties and the questions that divide politicians.

227 I plead to the young among you, who have not yet chosen their path in life, whose hearts are still soft and whose hopes are still pure. Give yourselves to the

Motherland, give yourselves to her help, give yourselves to her redemption. Will you not give to the future what the past has given to you? Will you not hand on to the generations to come some addition to the treasures that the generations of the past have bequeathed to you?

221 I ask you to take me as your helper; for the life which came from India is given back to India for service, and I sacrifice it to the helping of our race.

222 I ask you to prepare this beginning of a new life, of a new era for India and to pitch your hopes high and to pitch your aspirations high. For, it was said, that if you aim at a star, then your arrow will travel far.

### ***BUILD THE NEW INDIA !***

216 The moment is now propitious and the forces of the Nation can be led to victory. Will not all seize the golden opportunity and start a movement which, from the basis of the highest constitutionalism, will give India Dominion Status in the Commonwealth, Home Rule, Swarāj, within her own borders, that she may lead in building the New Civilization and permeate it with her ancient wisdom, her splendid culture?

258 India's liberty is now in the balance, and we must win it when the opportunity is given us, because opportunity not  
259 grasped becomes an obstacle in the future. We have to present a united front. Hindus and Musalmans, we should go together. When we have gained Self-Government,  
260 then we can afford to differ about smaller questions. A compromise with an enemy, that is a shameful thing. But a compromise with your brothers, a compromise in your



own family for family unity, to walk a little more slowly, because you will then be one party, that compromise is an  
250 honour and glory to those who make it. Nothing is too great a sacrifice if it secures a united front.

258 We must all give to India this service. Let smaller things wait. Let the Mother see the freedom you are to win, see the glory you are to create. Remember that that Mother must depend upon every one of you in order that her chains may be broken, and remember if you do your work, you will leave to your sons, to your daughters, to your grandchildren after you a New India, a happy India, a free India, a prosperous India. Now is the time to win that splendid prize, and a little effort now will do more for the winning of it than months, nay, years, of labour will do if you let slip the opportunity now.

466 In politics men play with human lives, with the prosperity of Nations, with the plenty or starvation of Peoples, with the safety or destruction of homes, with the happiness or misery of millions of men, women, and children. If Temples of stone are held to be holy, are guarded from the foot of the profane, shall any unclean and unfit enter the Temple that is built of human lives, that is consecrate to the service of Humanity?

265 The spirit needed is the spirit of readiness to sacrifice for the Mother and to seize the opportunity of serving Her, and of uplifting Her name in the eyes of the world, not the spirit of bargaining for so much privilege in exchange for so much service.

294 The problem of the moment is how to find the best man, and then to put him in the seat of power. If you

say : " What do you mean by best ? " I answer : " I mean the wisest, the most strong-willed, the most resolute, the most unselfish." Those are the qualifications of the Ruler, and without those qualifications in the Ruler, no happiness is possible for the State.

293 Each man should have power according to his knowledge and capacity. None should be without some share, but the power that he has should be limited to his knowledge,  
294 experience, and capacity. And the keynote : " From every man according to his capacity ; to every man according to his needs."

247 What has Theosophy to do with politics ? I say that it has everything to do with them. It has to build up a State of which Brotherhood shall be the foundation. Until that is the rule of a State there is no true civilization.

### ***BROTHERHOOD FOR CITIZENSHIP !***

234 Brotherhood imperatively demands fundamental social changes. The only question is whether the change shall be brought about by open-eyed wisdom or by blind suffering. At present, Society is engaged in trying the latter plan.

231 The Foundation of a Stable Society must be Brotherhood. The Need of every human being is for Happiness and for conditions favourable to his Evolution. The Duty of Society is to supply an environment which yields these. Animals, children, the sick, the ignorant, the helpless, all these have rights—the right to be kindly used, protected, nursed, taught, shielded ; the strong, the grown-up, have only duties.

233 But it must be planned out by wisdom, not by ignorance, and brought about by the love and sacrifice of the higher, and not by the uprising of the lower. Mobs can make revolutions ; but they cannot build a State.

295 The people have a right to happiness, but they can never get it for themselves by physical force, by legal violence, and by competition ; they must be guided to it by knowledge, by those who understand.

314 As long as a man is hungry, as long as a woman is starving, as long as children are crying out for food, so long every meal we eat should be bitter in our mouths. We are one people, one blood, brothers and sisters—every one of us, no matter what our work may be, what our social rank may be. Those who can sympathize with their brothers are worthy of the best gifts that God can give.

318 The submerged classes are down below the surface of happy society, and we have to lift them up. There lies the first great Indian duty of service.

319 Our duty is to lift our submerged brethren on to the level of National Consciousness, so that they may know themselves as part of a living Nation. The higher is responsible for the lower, as the elder brother is responsible for the bringing up of the younger. These are our younger brothers and sisters. We share a common flesh and blood.

317 Only the hand of the brother who is on his feet can raise the brother who has fallen, and it must be outstretched without any authority, save the authority of love and wisdom. These alone are mighty to save.

318 In the New Civilization : Education must be recast ; penology reformed ; labour must be raised from drudgery

to creative joy ; the submerged in every Nation must no longer remain the disinherited ; Society must no longer hold a differing standard in sex morality for men and women. Three things you must remember as guiding principles, when you deal with social matters : Karma, Reincarnation, Brotherhood.

320 It all comes back to Brotherhood. So long as our younger brothers, so long as our lower classes, are not tenderly cared for, trained and nurtured, so long our Society cannot take its place in the comity of Nations.

325-6 O Brahmanas, I have had a vision, which I hope is not only a dream, of your mighty caste going forward to the feet of India, the Mother, taking off the coronet of privilege from your own heads and laying it down in sacrifice at her feet. I have dreamt that this great act of National sacrifice, once accomplished, splendidly performed, India the Mother would stretch out her hand in blessing, and would say to her children who had made the sacrifice : " Go back to your people, and take your rightful place again as leaders still in India. Give to them your splendid intellect, give to them your wonderful eloquence, give to them the power of your past and the influence of your names, crowned no longer with the crown of privilege but with the deathless crown of self-sacrifice."

### **WORK FOR INDIA'S PROSPERITY !**

302 It is one of our objects to maintain the great ideal that man becomes more and more human as he becomes a helper and server of his fellow-creatures and his country, that the greatest virtue of human life is to help those who

are weaker than yourselves, and that the glory of life lies in service and not in rule. That has always been the ideal in India, and in the past of India that rule has been supreme.

303 To learn to be great merchants is to master the Science of Nations as regards the supply and demand for all that makes life healthy, happy, and beautiful. It was to the merchant class of old that all the other orders looked for sustenance and help, and their marvellous charity has overflowed the whole of the land and still exists to render fertile the desert places.

304 The Indian ideal of commerce was high and noble ; It was based on truth ; it was clothed in honesty as a garment, and I hope that the young men will bring back the ancient spirit into the struggles of modern life.

305-6 The readjustment of taxation on an equitable basis will be the biggest problem of the next few years. The whole system of laying taxes on the necessities of life, instead of taxing incomes, is radically vicious in principle. To tax food is to tax life itself. It is a financial system which is, at once, cruel and suicidal.

307 We should give land to the labour which is starving for work, and labour to the land which is barren for the lack of it." " Land to labour, and labour to land " ought to be our battle-cry, and should be the motto engraven on our shield.

308 Land, like air, and like all other natural gifts, cannot rightly be held as private property. Sacred rights of property ! But what of the more sacred rights of human life ? The life of the poor is more holy than the property of the

rich. If these vast estates are fenced in from us by parchment fences, then I say that the plough must go through the parchment, in order that the people may have bread.

310 You have insisted on giving the peasant the right to sell his land, the very last thing that he wants to do. You put power in the hands of the money-lender, and you take away from the peasant the shield that always protected him.

312 Surely it ought to be possible here to begin the labour movement on a human level and not on the level of one who would wrench everything from his employee with the resultant bitter resentment that he is starved into unwilling submission.

313 Support the men in uniting, advise them and help to make their union strong. I hope to see here every trade with its union.

304 Much has been lost to the world by the partial submergence of Indian ideals. Ours is to raise those ideals again in the face of the world, so that all may realize how much the Motherland has to give, and how she will enrich the world, even the western world that has impoverished her so sorely.

### ***NATIONAL EDUCATION FOR INDIA !***

241 You must begin by building up the citizens of the civilization, and the citizens are of course, in the children of today. Education must be founded on Brotherhood, Reincarnation, and Karma, and therefore on the study of the child, finding out what he has brought with him from past experiences as capacity.

- 340 It is sometimes said that the position of women in a country marks the level of civilization to which the country has risen ; but it seems to me that the position of the child even more marks the state of the community, and that where the children are not carefully nurtured and protected, there the nation cannot expect either the blessing of God or the respect of man.
- 342 There is not one boy, however turbulent, in whom there is not the instinct of hero-worship which you should utilize for his salvation. Draw out the love of the boy ; there is no boy who has not love in his heart. Do not threaten the boy, do not punish him, but coax him and give him prizes, show him things that attract him, and then you will win him back. That is a splendid work, a work which each of you can do ; but the danger is when each of you say : " It is not my duty ; others will do it."
- 336-7 These youths who will be the 'citizens of tomorrow and hold the destiny of India in their hands—these are here, ready, eager, to set their feet on the path of Service. The field is wide ; the harvest is ripe ; many labourers have come forward. All patriotic and wide-minded men, who work for the future, should be ready to help.
- 399 One of the most remarkable things about the Central Hindu College in Benares was the swift response of the students to the great national Ideals constantly held up before their eyes. There is apparently no School here which makes such evocation and training of right emotion. Yet people complain of the lack of enthusiasm and of self-sacrifice in the men ! As well might the husbandman complain of his barren field when he has sown no seed there.

407 Life's ideals must be wrought in the soft clay of youth, and they will harden into firm material with maturity. Train your boys and girls in religion, and then only will they become the men and women that India needs.

Those of you who would have India great, those of you who would see her mighty, remember that the condition of national greatness is the teaching of religion to the young.

Teach them to be religious without being sectarian ;  
Teach them to be devoted without being fanatical ;  
Teach them to love their own faith, without decrying  
or hating the faiths of their fellow-citizens.

Make religion a unifying force, not a separative ;  
Make religion a builder-up of nationality, not a  
disintegrator ;

Make religion the fostering mother of civic virtues,  
the nurse and teacher of morality.

Then shall the boys and girls grow up into the great citizens  
of the India that shall be.

Then shall they live in an India, mighty, prosperous,  
and free.

408 Then shall they look back with gratitude to those who, in the days of darkness, lifted up the light, and gave the religious teaching which alone makes good citizens and great men.

410- What is the object of Education ?

11 To train the body,  
To train the emotions,  
To evolve and discipline the mind,  
To subdue body, emotion, and mind to the spirit, the  
Inner Ruler Immortal.



To put all this in a single sentence ;

*To make the man a good Citizen of a free and spiritual Commonwealth of Humanity.*

449 One great rule of our social order should be : Every child who is born into a civilized nation will be certain of the circumstances which bring out of him to the full every faculty which he has brought with him into the world. That is the corner-stone on which I would found the new Society.

39 Indian education can only live when it is again rooted in the very soil of the Indian Village. Restore the Village Panchayat or small Republic—the truest of all democracies, give back to the village its land, and its power to deal with its own internal problems, and again will there grow up generations of young Indians trained in an education of the hand, the heart, and the head, through which will be expressed the heritage of the Motherland :

*Creative Spirituality*

241-2 Every one of you can find no nobler service for the Motherland than helping education. You must help those who can teach, if you cannot teach yourself. You can choose, each one for yourself, to work in this great world-vineyard, or you can remain idle. Remember that on your choice depends your own future. And on the choice of a majority of you depends the speed of the coming of the new civilization. You can quicken it. You can retard it also. And the choice must be made.

488 Let your thought for unity be potent and resolute. Teach your boys and girls to say : “ I am an Indian.” Out of the mouths of the children thus speaking shall be born the India of tomorrow.

- 301 It is the belief of those who are working in this movement for National Education that the Indian ideal of civilization is the highest that the world has yet known ; that in the recognition of knowledge as greater than wealth you have the proclamation of the true nobility of mind ; that when knowledge, wedded to emotion and recognizing the unity of the race, becomes wisdom, then it is that you have enshrined in the civilization the hope of the coming world.
- 301 Home Rule on one side and National Education on the other ; the two wings wherewith the bird rises in the air. Both are wanted and both must be had if India is to come forward. Then the great bird of India will rise high in the atmosphere and will be as it was of old—the admiration and splendour of the world.

### ***RESTORE INDIA'S CREATIVE GLORIES !***

- 18 What is the secret of India's immortal youth ? It lay  
382 hidden in her Education and her Culture, or rather in the Ideals which created these. Let her turn again to her Ideals, and she shall renew her strength.
- 384 Beauty was an essential feature of the Indian Ideal of  
239 Education and Culture. More Beauty must be sought, for it is a necessity of life for all, not a luxury for the few. Beauty in dress, in the home, in the town, is a crying need  
384 as an evolutionary force. For Beauty diversified into the Arts is the true refiner and uplifter of Humanity. Without  
403 it, true Democracy is impossible. How impossible it is for a nation to reach a full-orbed greatness, unless Art plays its part in the shaping of the nation's growth !

384       The revival and advance of true Indian Art Ideals nurses  
 in its bosom the rightful Infant Heir of the heritage of  
 India's Art Ideals in the Past, the Infant who, in the future,  
 in the maturity of India's Art Ideals, shall give to the world  
 the priceless gift of an Art which shall redeem it alike from  
 materialism and superstition, and shall make the life of the  
 Nation and the life of the individual full of Beauty, in the  
 cottage as well as in the palace, for Art, as I have often-  
 times said, must be no longer a luxury for the rich but the  
 daily bread of the poor. That is part of India's Dharma.

384-5     Art is the International language, in which mind can  
 speak to mind, heart to heart, where lips are dumb.

388       Natarâja dancing, as in the wondrous figure in the heart  
 of the great Temple of Chidambaram, shakes from His  
 Damru the sounds which built worlds, for creation is the  
 activity of the High Gods, whose laughter falls in golden  
 rain of benedictions on Their Work, and all the Sons of  
 God surround it, shouting for joy.

389       Art is the creative activity of Man, his heritage from his  
 "Father-in-Heaven," and his duty, as animated by the  
 One Life, is to make himself, in all his creative activities, a  
 co-worker with the Supreme Artist, a centre of Beauty,  
 385       and a creator of beautiful actions. Art will permeate the  
 whole atmosphere of the New Civilization which is on the  
 threshold.

405       Not until the great spiritual impulse now sweeping over  
 the earth, that we call the Divine Wisdom, Theosophy  
 gives birth to a new Ideal and conception of Beauty, will  
 the Art of the future be seen among us, the Art which shall  
 be the expression of Beauty for our age.

**REVIVE INDIA'S SPIRITUAL LIFE !**

405 If you would preserve what is left of Indian Art, if you would create the Indian Art of the future, you must revive the religious spirit which is the mother of Art, you must welcome the latest—and the most ancient—expression of that spirit, Theosophy, the Supreme Science. Then, and then only, will Indian ideals of Beauty draw again the hearts of mankind, and give through the most spiritual of religions, the highest expression of Art.

385 Religion and Art have ever been twin-angels. Let us follow them as they point to the East, where the fair Dawn-Maidens are tinting our earth-born clouds with their rose-tipped fingers, to welcome the Rising Sun of India, as He leaps across the horizon, and floods our world with the glory of His unveiled Face.

378 India can never again be great, save as she is religious, save as she gains the Spirituality that she has lost. But one charge has she received from the Highest ; one duty that undischarged, weighs her down to the ground ; but, that discharged, will lift her again a light and beacon in the eyes of men, and that is, to be the safeguard, above all things of religion and truth, and to wed spiritual philosophy to the devotion of a noble religion.

362 In this land there is more hope of a spiritual revival, and if a spiritual revival here there may be, then it will pour outwards to all the four corners of the world. For spirituality is more easily awakened in India than elsewhere. The spiritual heart here is only sleeping, whereas in some other lands it has scarcely yet come to birth. For you must remember that in this land is the birthplace of every

religion, and that from India outwards, religions have made their way. Therefore it is that the soul of our Mother India is so important for the future of the world, and therefore it is that the materialism of India is so fatal. For it is here alone that lies the hope that man has been looking for—spiritual life ; for, in truth, unless the life of the Spirit comes in this land, by reviving here, then the hope is baseless that spirituality is to spread over the world. With this revival, all the sleeping truths of other religions shall look again towards their Indian Mother, and make her once again the Spiritual Teacher of the World.

There is one thing which is poisoning the mind of India, and that is the kind of science which is the teacher of materialism and works against Spirituality in the mind. How should I be able to tell you of the moral regeneration of India unless first I can strike at that which is piercing her heart and sucking out her very lifeblood.

It is the spiritual sight which is the true vision. That spiritual consciousness always speaks for Unity, for Brotherhood, for Service, and for Sacrifice ; as it unfolds, it will bring the materials for a nobler social State.

Sacrifice is a healthy instinct of the true human heart, and wherever it meets weakness there comes the impulse to serve. All who suffer have an indefeasible claim on all who are able to help, by the mere fact of their suffering. All must have their share of happy life. Without this, Society perishes. Where Brotherhood is ignored, it breaks that which ignores it.

So long as one child walks the streets, helpless and miserable, so long as one boy causes terror to his

neighbourhood, so long it is your duty and mine to bring forward the help that those helpless ones have a right to demand at our hands. It is thus that some of us have learnt the meaning of religion.

It is not religion simply to go to church or mosque or temple. That is good, but it is not the heart of religion. It is religion to help the little children ; it is religion to wipe away the tears of the sorrowful ; to nurse the sick ; to comfort the afflicted ; to make the world a better and a happier place, because you are living in it. In vain do you mark your foreheads, and in vain you wear the green turban of Mecca, which shows that you have been on pilgrimage to that holy post. The true religion is the serving of the helpless, and thus alone can man testify his faith in the eyes of God and man alike. Oh ! we are always ready to stretch out empty hands to God and the Angels above us ; but full hands must be stretched out to those below us, otherwise the hands held upwards will ever remain unfilled, the cries unanswered from on high.

372 The special work that we have to do for Religion is to proclaim, to live, with all the energy that we can the unity of all religions, the unity of men.

374 Religious exclusiveness destroys love of country. Therefore must the warring religions learn their unity. The lesson will be learned in India first, and through India in the world, because here alone are all the great religions  
376 found living side by side. Not one jewel should be grudged its place in the necklet that adorns the Mother, whose most ancient possession is the jewel of the religion of the Universal Self.

375      What matters it that one worships in a temple and the other in a mosque, if both are Indians and serving a single nation ?

376      As many peoples must blend here into One Nation, so many religions must blend into the One Religion.

378      As men of every faith unite in social, civil, and political work they will bring the spirit of religion into all, and work with love and knowledge. Then shall India show the world that a Nation may embrace all varieties of thought, and only be the richer for the variety, and from India shall spread that spirit of knowledge and love which shall blend all nations into one Brotherhood of Humanity, and merge all religions in the WISDOM.

489      If India is to be the spiritual Light of the future, in her must be focussed the light that comes from every faith, until in the prism of India they are all united into the One Light which shall flood with sunlight the world, and all lights shall blend in the Divine Wisdom. That is our Work.

### **EXALT THE WOMANHOOD OF INDIA !**

424      We may be sure that Indian greatness will not return until Indian womanhood obtains a larger, a freer, and a fuller life, for largely in the hands of Indian women must lie the redemption of India. The wife inspires or retards

355      the husband ; the mother makes or mars the child. Woman is man's inspirer to greatness, and sacrifices acceptable to the Gods cannot be rendered where she is not.

425      The power of woman to uplift or debase man is practically unlimited, and man and woman must walk forward

hand-in-hand to the raising of India, else will she never be raised at all.

333 Leave the Hindu woman untouched by Western thought and do not destroy a type which, just because it is unique, would leave less full by its disappearance the chord of humanity. We have women enough who are brilliantly intellectual and competent ; let us leave unmarred the one  
421 type which is the incarnation of spiritual beauty. The world cannot afford to lose the pure, lofty, tender, and yet strong, type of Indian womanhood.

355 For India's uplift, then, her daughters must come out from their seclusion, and take back their place in the common life, out of which they have slipped during the last century, to the sore detriment of the Motherland. India's uplift will come speedily when her daughters put to it their  
357 delicate, but strong, hands. Womanhood as well as manhood must be consecrated to the Motherland. Women's wisdom  
355 as well as men's is needed to dig deeply and build strongly the foundations of the New India, the India of the Free.

360 The subjection of the Motherland and of the Mother must end together. For, Man and Woman are the halves of a Perfect Whole, and by their united strength shall India enter into her Kingdom. In all troubles and distresses all the Shining Ones cry to the Shakti for deliverance, and  
361 where the masculine fails, the feminine triumphs, and drives away the Evil, and restores the throne to Good. And the woman is Her Representative on earth, the Mother, holiest and sweetest of names.

361 In the help of the representatives of the Shakti will lie the certain triumph of India in the Nation and in the



Indian home; and so it is that we go forward full of courage.

### **WORSHIP THE MOTHER IMPERISHABLE!**

379- Your Mother, India, is appealing day by day and year by  
80 year. Often I think that, during these years of the Kaliyuga, she has gone away into some far-off region to wait there until her children call her back. But what shall bring her? The thought that her children are crying for her in her absence.

I hear in my dreams that cry rising from the Indian land; I see in my dreams child after child weary of the play in the street, and thinking of turning homeward where the mother's arms are waiting. Looking upwards, I see on her face a smile, the smile of mother's love waiting to welcome her truants home again. I know that soon there will rise from the whole of India the one mighty cry:

*"O India our Mother; Mother and Guru of the world,*

*Come back amongst us once again! Come home!"*

501 Let those who work for the Mother forget everything save her cause. Let the Mother, when she comes among her children, find love in their hearts, courage in their actions, that we may be worthy to welcome to her throne that mightiest and holiest of Nations—the Indian people.

289 For India, the Sacred Motherland, shall survive in the future, as she has lived in the past—the mightiest of all the Nations that God has made, and always a Nation at her heart.

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321 India, the Mother of Nations, the Mother of civilizations,  
I know her, I love her, I worship her, as I know and love  
and worship no other country on the surface of the earth,  
and therefore I would fain see her what she can be, what  
she is in reality, what she must be in the lives of the men  
and women born of her.

<sup>1</sup> So long as breath remains in me, I shall strive to help  
this land, the greatest of all lands, in the past, the greatest  
of all lands in the future, if you will.

321 Therefore I call on every Theosophist—whether member  
of The Society or not—to yoke himself to the service of  
Indian Society, and put it in the place in which it ought to  
be—an example, a model, which Vaivasvata Manu gave for  
the great Aryan Race.

462 Sometimes I look forward to the happier days of to-  
morrow when all roads shall be open, when all ways shall  
be clear, when a vast Empire shall look round on her  
children filled with patriotism; then men and women in  
other lands will look back to the days in which we are, and  
they will say :

“ We thank them that in the days of fear they still were  
brave; that in the days of ignorance they still looked  
forward to the hope; that in the darkness they never  
forgot the coming light.”

For it is a grander thing to serve while others stand back,  
than to take part in the progress of a mighty nation  
when the Empire welcomes the children born of her  
womb.

<sup>1</sup> Source unknown.

**ARISE, YOUNG INDIA !**

464      Young India means the youth of the Nation, rising above all divisions, forgetting all ancient animosities, with its watchword, *United India*, with its banner on which is inscribed : *Worship the Motherland, Vande Mâtaram.*

463      India gave you birth, she is your Mother ; yet you shall recreate her as your daughter, in the years to come. In the great chain of life,† in which each generation is a golden link, every link is supported by those that are before it, every link supports those that are after it.

The Destiny of a Nation is folded within its youth, as is the flower within the close embrace of the sepals that sheathe the bud. That which you are thinking today, the Nation will think tomorrow.

465      You, the students of today, boys in school, young men in college, are to go out into a New India, an India that is rising out of Other-Rule into Self-Rule, like Lakshmi out of the ocean churned by the Suras and Asuras. That New India will be shaped, guided, developed by you, and by thousands like you, all over the land.

466      In the maturity of your manhood, you will be responsible for India's peace, India's order, India's progress ; with the glory you must take also the responsibility of Freedom. And Freedom is a Goddess beautiful but austere ; she is the armed Warrior, strong and unstained. The Heroes who follow her are mighty men, not weaklings, and she needs for her service men, and not drones.

297      To you, dear sons and grandsons, I have a word to say : You love me, I know, and you will listen to me. I earnestly pray you not to rush into political action which is not your

duty. India's good must come first, with you as with us. Help us by not thus playing into the hands of those who are opposed to India's freedom. I know you will do this, for this struggle is for the Motherland, and you, the sons of India, will make her cause your own.

Study, think, prepare yourselves for your future as citizens of an India that will be free. But do not plunge now into a struggle for which you are unready, and, by your condition, unfit.

433 No durable things are built on violent passion. Nature grows her plants in silence and in darkness, and only when they have become strong do they put their heads above the ground. Help in every way that you can, save by ways that are wrong, for remember that the Devas are behind all national policies, and therefore that the wrong way is always the long way and useless.

464 Does it chill your enthusiasm when you are told that National Service begins with rigorous training? If so, your enthusiasm is only like a fire of twigs that blazes up furiously with much crackling and then dies down. The only enthusiasm worthy of a Patriot is that which remains white-hot under difficulties, under drudgery, under discipline. Do not venture to profane the Altar of the Motherland with a fire that dies down under the breath of disciplined training.

465 The only enthusiasm useful in the cause of Liberty is like the tempered steel: It has been purified in the furnace of discipline, hammered on the anvil of knowledge, poured red-hot into the ice-cold water of drudgery, until it has a strength that naught can break, a resilience that naught

can overstrain, a keenness that naught can resist, a flexibility that naught can escape. Only when your characters are like tempered steel will you be worthy to go on active service.

377- A man who is not a patriot, unless he be a great Rishi  
378 or Sage, will be no true lover of Humanity. Never let a man fear that love to his Motherland will prevent him from loving Humanity. It is the road thereto ; the heart expands as it is exercised. Ungrudging love of the Motherland is, then, the thing needed.

But let it be remembered that while patriotism is the flower, service is the fruit, and patriotism must grow into service. To make knowledge fruitful, it must be lived, not  
470 only studied. Organize yourselves for Social Service.

467-8 Play well the great game of life. For the Mother's sake, dedication of all to Her, of all as the preparation for Her Service, shall make all drudgery fascinating, and gild the dulllest study with the promise of future use. Body, emotions, mind, all are consecrate to Her, are held in trust for Her Service.

490 Aim at progress, my sons. Strive to make India's future worthy of her ancient greatness. Outgrow your fathers in knowledge, outstrip your elders in devotion.

445 Your destiny lies in your own hands. Your future is to be of your creating. You must build the basis of noble character, and of the public spirit which shows itself in true citizenship. You can only make yourselves free by becoming noble and upright, brave and true. Nations made of,  
446 such men *must* be free. It is no light thing to be a citizen of a country that is free. Many of you think of the joy

and the glory of it. It is well to remember the burden and the responsibility.

I can think of no young generation happier than the present. It is the leaders today who are battling for the freedom of the Motherland, and it is the younger men who will inherit the power and the responsibility that the victory of the leaders will secure to India. So it is on the young men of today the country looks with eyes of hope and  
447 eagerness. To that great end there lies on the younger generation that supreme duty of service.

436 Spiritual nature is innate in Indians and what they want are manly, virile qualities, initiative, quick judgment, prompt determination, and, above all, courage to face opposition, to endure, strive, and persevere.

399 You will only prove yourselves trueborn if you live again as your sires did.

335 Boys who wish to have a healthy, vigorous manhood and a healthy old age, must be Brahmacharins during their student-life. And this does not mean only that they must not marry, but also that they must be pure in thought and act. For your own sake, and for India's sake, my young brothers, be pure, be pure!

390 Your dharma as Indians, is to spread Beauty around you, and not allow yourselves to be distorted into ugliness. Let us wear the graceful and suitable raiment of the East, not the ugly and inartistic raiment of the West. Let each of us be a messenger of Beauty, in our language, our manners, our courtesy.

442 Away with all apologies for India, with all deprecatory explanations of India's ways, and customs, and traditions.

India is Herself, and needs not to be justified, for verily God has evolved no greater, no more exquisite Nationality than India's among all the broken reflections of His own Perfect Beauty.

316 It is on the young men of India that I place my hope for the redemption of the masses of India from ignorance and degradation.

349- Go out as messengers of mercy, as messengers of love.  
50 Check every act of cruelty you see, explain the wickedness of it and the harm it carries with it. Then you will feel that you are leading the higher life and are channels of mercy and not of suffering to the animal world.

468 The essence of Religion is Unity, the Realization of the One God, within and without, flowering into the Brotherhood of all that lives.

371-2 You must act truth, you must feel truth, you must think truth, in one phrase, you must LIVE TRUTH.

42 Would that every Aryan boy would make a vow in his heart to keep truth unstained, for he would by keeping truth do more to serve the Nation than if he shone out as a brilliant light in the scholastic, legal, or political worlds.

372 Let everyone follow Truth at all hazards, no matter whither she may lead them. Let Truth be our spear and sword, Truth our shield and armour. Though she slay us, yet let us trust in her. She will crown us with victory in the end.

479 Now is the hour for sacrifice to the Motherland. Let  
480 those who love Her respond. When there is a call to the defence of the Motherland, all grievances must be thrown aside, and it is the test of Indian patriotism how many will

481 come forward to enrol. Men are needed, brave and gallant men out of which stuff the Nation is made. I would ask you to put aside all discouragement and think of the Mother.

481 Young men, lay down your youth, your strong muscles, your brave hearts. Go to her great altar and vow your lives to her.

Give her everything you have to give, she will take it up and bless it, and your poor gift shall be turned into gold and jewel, for the touch of the Motherland makes all sacred.

481 I have no son, no grandson to give, but I give my life to India, and if persons give all they have, they cannot give anything more.

What is suffering worth if it finds India's freedom? What is life worth except for India's sake?

481 Do not let the world say that India's children are unworthy of their past, that India's sons are today cowards where once they were heroes.

<sup>1</sup> To Arms! then, young men of India, for the Motherland and Britain, united in a partnership of Empire. To Arms! for the sake of the undimmed glory of India in the old heroic days. To Arms! for the safety of your homes, the honour of your mothers, wives and daughters. To Arms! to win Liberty for yourselves and for your children. Never shall History tell of India, that, at a supreme crisis, she stood aside and saw the World's Liberty trampled out in blood and fire, that she added a page of shame as the last record of her splendid story, only to fall, herself a victim, amid the ruins of a dying world.

<sup>1</sup> 6 May 1918, New India.



471       Rarely in the long history of the world has youth opening before it a manhood so full of noblest possibilities of achievement. May Ishwara help you to be worthy of it. May the Motherland have cause to be proud of you. Take as the motto for the coming years :

***Be God-loving and Man-serving ;***

***Be Pure, be Brave, be Strong !***





